

## Calendar of Events

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October 7, 2025

### **Training / Staff Development Active Learning Community Meeting**

**Online via Zoom**

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,  
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

*We're excited to unveil a fresh approach to professional connection and collaboration. Our traditional networking meetings are now Active Learning Communities—dynamic spaces designed for shared learning, real conversation, and practical support.*

*Join your peers to exchange ideas, celebrate successes, and discover new solutions to common challenges. You'll also get a guided introduction to our new message boards, which will help keep the conversation going long after the meeting ends.*

*This meeting will be held through Zoom which is user friendly to all devices. You will receive a link in your confirmation email a reminder 2 hours before the meeting. We hope you will join us. Please send agenda items/questions to Melissa Lattanzi.*

October 8, 2025

## **Doing What Matters: Values in the Library**

**Online via Zoom**

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,  
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

*Our values are the lens through which we interpret the world. They are the principles that guide our thoughts, actions, and behaviors. When we consciously and intentionally leverage our core values in our work, it gives us a sense of confidence, meaning, and purpose. It also helps us navigate conflict and consensus with grace and courage. In this workshop, individuals will reflect on the core values they bring to their work and how to use their values with more intention. Walk away ready to plan for how to use values with more intention in communication, work activities, and interactions with others.*

### *Learning Objectives:*

- *Identify personal core values*
- *Plan for how to use core values in daily work for more meaning, satisfaction, and excellence*
- *Understanding and techniques for dealing with values conflicts*

### *Presenter:*

*Sharon Morris has worked in library development for over 20 years and conducts workshops, courses, and leadership institutes throughout the country. Her interests are leadership, research, management, supervision, communications, wellness & libraries, play, values, improv comedy, and insight. Sharon takes an asset-based approach to learning and invites all to engage. She has earned an MLIS and PhD in Managerial Leadership in Libraries. Her workshops and webinars are designed based on adult learning theory and include experiential learning, content informed by research, "fun" aspects, and time for reflection and planning to apply concepts in the workplace.*

October 8, 2025

**Directors/Deputy Directors Active Learning Community Meeting**

**Online**

**Via Zoom**

,

03:30 PM - 04:30 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,

[lattanzm@neo-rls.org](mailto:lattanzm@neo-rls.org)

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October 9, 2025

## **Back to the Book XXIV: Blurred Lines: A Genre-Blending Discussion**

Hilton Garden Inn

8971 Wilcox Dr

Twinsburg, OH 44087

09:30 AM - 04:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,

[lattanzm@neo-rls.org](mailto:lattanzm@neo-rls.org)

*We're thrilled to invite you to this year's Back to the Book, where we'll explore the exciting world of genre-blending in modern literature.*

*The day kicks off with Lainey Mays from HarperCollins, who will share insights into current trends in genre fusion and offer a sneak peek at what's next in the publishing world. Next, we dive into the comeback of Cozy Everything,*

*After lunch, we will have a collaborative brainstorming session where we'll exchange ideas on genre-blending and book discussions. Next, we will explore the ever-popular rise of romantasy—where romance meets fantasy in bold, unexpected ways.*

*We'll close the day with an exciting virtual author talk featuring Kara Loo and Jennifer Young, co-authors of Alice Chen's Reality Check, as they discuss their unique approach to storytelling and genre-crossing narratives. You won't want to miss this one!*

### **Genre Blending**

*What makes a book stand out in its genre? Does it need to blend different tropes? Does it need a certain ending? Genre mashing is ever-present and won't be going anywhere soon. In this session, we will dive into some current trends in several genres and how they overlap. There will be a discussion of forthcoming books that fall into these categories as well as a display of all the FREE resources HarperCollins has for librarians to stay up-to-date on HarperCollins offerings.*

#### **Presenter:**

*Lainey Mays is the Assistant Manager for Library Marketing at HarperCollins Publishers. Originally from Mississippi, she came to New York to study for a Masters in Publishing. She enjoys reading any and all things as long as she can learn something new. She represents all adult titles for HarperCollins by scheduling author visits to libraries across the country, offering title presentations, and conducting author interviews. Her job allows her to hang out with librarians all day and talk about books...can life get much better than that?*

### **Cozy Everything**

*Cozy is making a comeback and expanding beyond mystery into many other genres. The challenge for librarians and readers is finding a novel that celebrates the elements of cozy fiction while staying true to the things we love best about genre fiction. In this session, we will discuss the hallmarks of cozy fiction, take a fresh approach to the idea of cozy across genres, and build a book list of conceptually cozy reads for your patrons. (Spoiler alert: cozy horror is still horror.)*

#### **Presenter:**

*Mary Olson is Readers' Advisory Librarian at Medina County District Library. Her duties include training, direct service to book clubs, promotional writing, collection development, and programming. She is the 2015 Allie Beth Martin award winner and the 2016 Pat Carterette Award winner.*

*Your most popular holds lists, and E-book purchases are filled with fae, dragons, vampires, witches, and shifters. A beloved genre has seen new life thanks to an explosion of interest on social media. Romantasy readers savor a book where the love story is just as important as the world building and plot. In this session, we will discuss the tropes, acronyms, authors, and series that define romantasy. You will come away with a list of books to recommend, from introductions to popular series, to deep cuts for your most avid romantasy readers*

*Presenters:*

*Kelly Halleen is the Supervisor of the Brunswick Library Children's Department, a branch of Medina County District Library. She has worked 12 years at MCDL. She is currently the Assistant Coordinator of Ohio Library Council's Children's Services Division. She has presented at several OLC conferences including Convention & Expo, Storytime Foundations Workshop, and the Youth Services Conference. She loves cheering on her library staff, storytime, and connecting with all the families in her community. Beyond her children's experience, Kelly is a devoted reader of adult romance, fantasy, and excited to work with the "grown-ups" at this training.*

*Kaitlin Booth is the Collection Development Coordinator for Akron-Summit County Public Library. She supervises the librarians and support staff who select and manage ASCPL's physical and digital collections. She previously worked as a Collection Development Librarian at Cuyahoga County Public Library, an Acquisitions Librarian at Medina County District Library, and has been a librarian in the youth services, reference, and genealogy departments at Stark County District Library.*

*We will end the day with a virtual author visit from Kara Loo and Jennifer Young, co-authors of Alice Chen's Reality Check.*

October 10, 2025

**Academic Library Directors Active Learning Community In-Person Meeting**  
**Grasselli Library & Breen Learning Center**

**John Carroll University**  
**University Heights, OH 44118**

02:00 PM - 04:00 PM EST

Hillary Brown,  
hillary.brown@neo-rls.org

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*If you are interested in getting together for lunch it will be at 12:30 pm and a location will be sent out prior to the meeting.*

October 14, 2025

**Beyond the Stamp - Your Role, Responsibilities, and Risks as an Ohio Notary Public-Canfield  
Canfield Branch of Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County**

**Canfield, OH 44406**

**01:00 PM - 04:30 PM EST**

Melissa Lattanzi,

[lattanzm@neo-rls.org](mailto:lattanzm@neo-rls.org)

*Hello NE Ohio Librarians! In cooperation with the Northeast Ohio Regional Library System, we're continuing our 2025 statewide tour of librarian notary classes in North Canton, Youngstown, & Shaker Heights!*

*An increasing number of Ohio libraries are offering Notary Public services to their patrons as a community service. As such, libraries (and their individual notaries) can be potentially liable for these all-too-often under trained staff notaries, when they are dealing with many and varied signing requests from your patrons.*

*We are again presenting our popular advanced Ohio notary class "Beyond the Stamp - Your Role, Responsibilities, and Risks as an Ohio Notary Public" , updated with Ohio's new notary laws that were effective April 4.*

*Proper training is essential for your staff notaries! We have trained hundreds of Ohio librarians statewide, and you'll be surprised at how much you don't know, about what you don't know! As mentioned, lack of notary knowledge could lead to errors, and potential exposure for both you and your library! We particularly stress documents librarians should NOT handle!*

*This is THE best, longest-running, and most comprehensive Ohio notary training available, and is particularly valuable for LIBRARIANS providing notary services to their patrons. It's the opportunity to receive the full Ohio training you never had. Importantly, the class is IN-PERSON, so all questions are welcomed, and you can learn from the experiences of the other notaries attending.*

*These in-person classes will be held:*

*October 14 - Canfield Library of Youngstown/Mahoning County 1pm-430pm*

*\*Check-in begins 30 minutes before class. Exams for NEW applicants will be given immediately following class.*

*The Ohio Society of Notaries is the professional association for Ohio notaries, dedicated to awareness, education, and advocacy for Ohio's 220,000 notaries, and the important role they play in protecting our citizens. We have been THE primary resource for Ohio notary information since 2009. Visit us at [www.ohionotaries.org](http://www.ohionotaries.org)*

*Unlike other notary classes around the state, this is not just a boring regurgitation of Ohio statutes and legalese, by those who have never been in the REAL Ohio notary world, or the online versions where you can't even ask questions.*

*It's taught by Roger Rill, President of the Ohio Society of Notaries, with over 47 years of Ohio notary experience. Roger was the co-author and driving force behind passage of the Ohio Notary Public Modernization Act that became effective law in September 2019, and which completely revamped and improved Ohio's notary system. Roger was honored by NNA as a 2019 National Notary Of The Year Special Honoree (see attachment). Learn from the best!*

*\*NOTE: We are also an Authorized Provider of Ohio Notary Training/Testing for the Secretary of State. If your current commission expires within ONE YEAR of the class date, this session fulfills the Training Requirement for your renewal. As mentioned, the Ohio exam will also be given for NEW notary applicants - details below.*

*Class may run a little longer with questions. Feel free to bring a lunch.*

*?A class description is linked here, along with some additional Ohio info attachments you'll find helpful. If you don't know the FAQ answers, you are risking your commission, and potential liability, and you REALLY need to join us for this seminar!*

*\*IMPORTANT - BRING THE DOCUMENTS TO CLASS; you can also use them for the exam!*

*Registration fee is \$75, or \$130 if a NEW applicant also taking the exam.*

*\*PLEASE INDICATE WHICH CLASS LOCATION YOU'LL BE ATTENDING!*

*\*Checks/money orders are payable to Ohio Society of Notaries, and mailed to: OSN, 5669 Slater Ridge, Hilliard, OH 43026. Registration deadline is 24 hours prior to each class date.*

*We much prefer pre-payment to minimize no-shows, and not have a long line at check-in. Payments of cash, check, or money order will be accepted at the door, but you MUST pre-register!! Receipts provided upon request. NO CREDIT CARDS.*

*You'll receive a detailed email confirmation of your registration a few days prior to class.*

*\*\*ADVANCE REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED!! Please register ASAP as seats may be limited. Reply to [roger@ohionotaries.org](mailto:roger@ohionotaries.org) or [notary13@hotmail.com](mailto:notary13@hotmail.com) with name, years as notary (or new), and any particular issues you'd like discussed.*

*If a current notary, please include your commission expiration date.*

*Importantly, include if you are a NEW notary applicant, OR if your current commission expires before October 16, 2026!*

*You'll be provided a class completion and/or exam certificate to submit to the Secretary of State to complete your new or renewal training requirement.*

*It's a fun class, with lots of interaction and experiences from your classmates, which will include local mobile notaries. Swap business cards with other attendees and create your own notary network!*

*?\*\*Feel free to also join our Ohio Notary Network forum Facebook Group, and hang out/chat with over 3000 other Buckeye notaries!\*\**

*Call 614-336-7878 or email [info@ohionotaries.org](mailto:info@ohionotaries.org) for any Ohio notary questions, anytime. We answer the phone and emails day or evening, 7 days a week, and the service is FREE! We're here for YOU - this is the ONLY such resource in the state!*

*Hope to see you! Other upcoming classes around the state will always appear on the Training Page of our website.*

*Roger Rill, President  
Ohio Society of Notaries  
614 336 7878  
[www.ohionotaries.org](http://www.ohionotaries.org)*

October 14, 2025

**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Accessibility Active Learning Community Meeting  
Online via Zoom**

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Hillary Brown,  
hillary.brown@neo-rls.org

*We're excited to unveil a fresh approach to professional connection and collaboration. Our traditional networking meetings are now Active Learning Communities—dynamic spaces designed for shared learning, real conversation, and practical support.*

*Join your peers to exchange ideas, celebrate successes, and discover new solutions to common challenges. You'll also get a guided introduction to our new message boards, which will help keep the conversation going long after the meeting ends.*

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October 15, 2025

## **Beyond the Stamp - Your Role, Responsibilities, and Risks as an Ohio Notary Public-North Canton**

**North Canton Public Library**

**North Canton, OH 44720**

10:45 AM - 02:15 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,

[lattanzm@neo-rls.org](mailto:lattanzm@neo-rls.org)

*Hello NE Ohio Librarians! In cooperation with the Northeast Ohio Regional Library System, we're continuing our 2025 statewide tour of librarian notary classes in North Canton, Youngstown, & Shaker Heights!*

*An increasing number of Ohio libraries are offering Notary Public services to their patrons as a community service. As such, libraries (and their individual notaries) can be potentially liable for these all-too-often under trained staff notaries, when they are dealing with many and varied signing requests from your patrons.*

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*Proper training is essential for your staff notaries! We have trained hundreds of Ohio librarians statewide, and you'll be surprised at how much you don't know, about what you don't know! As mentioned, lack of notary knowledge could lead to errors, and potential exposure for both you and your library! We particularly stress documents librarians should NOT handle!*

*This is THE best, longest-running, and most comprehensive Ohio notary training available, and is particularly valuable for LIBRARIANS providing notary services to their patrons. It's the opportunity to receive the full Ohio training you never had. Importantly, the class is IN-PERSON, so all questions are welcomed, and you can learn from the experiences of the other notaries attending.*

*These in-person classes will be held:*

*October 15 - North Canton Library 1045am-215pm*

*\*Check-in begins 30 minutes before class. Exams for NEW applicants will be given immediately following class.*

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October 15, 2025

## **Marketing and Outreach: Creating Engagement and Awareness**

**Online via Zoom**

10:00 AM - 11:15 AM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,  
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

*Explore how library marketing and communications intersect with community engagement to build stronger connections with your audience. In this webinar, participants will identify goals for awareness, engagement, and usage while creating a comprehensive “map” of the library’s community touchpoints. Learn strategies to communicate consistently, craft compelling content, and strengthen partnerships for maximum impact. This session provides actionable steps to enhance engagement and ensure alignment with your library’s strategic priorities.*

### **Learning Objectives:**

*Identify and define outreach, marketing, and engagement goals aligned with their library’s mission.*

*Map out key community touchpoints and explore techniques to build and sustain partnerships that increase visibility and usage.*

*Leave with practical tools and next steps tailored to their own library context.*

### **Presenter:**

*Cordelia Anderson has a strong reputation as a thought leader and communications professional in the library industry. She is the author of *Library Marketing and Communications: Strategies to Increase Relevance and Results* from ALA Editions, and has received recognition such as *Library Journal Marketer of the Year* (2016) and *John Cotton Dana* awards (2016 and 2006). She has served as a jury member for the *John Cotton Dana PR* award; an advisory board member for UNC Charlotte’s *Atkins Library*; and a board member for the *Library Marketing & Communications Conference*. Cordelia worked in public libraries for 15 years, serving for a decade as *Director of Marketing & Communications* at *Charlotte Mecklenburg Library*.*

October 15, 2025

## **Circulation Active Learning Community Meeting**

**Online via Zoom**

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Hillary Brown,  
hillary.brown@neo-rls.org

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October 16, 2025

**Beyond the Stamp - Your Role, Responsibilities, and Risks as an Ohio Notary Public-Shaker Heights**  
**Shaker Heights Public Library**  
**16500 Van Aken Blvd.**  
**Shaker Heights, OH 44120**  
10:00 AM - 01:30 PM EST  
Melissa Lattanzi,  
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

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October 16, 2025

## **A Deeper Dive into the Science of Reading-Repeated**

**Mentor Public Library**

**8215 Mentor Ave**

**Mentor, OH 44060**

**09:30 AM - 04:00 PM EST**

Melissa Lattanzi,

[lattanzm@neo-rls.org](mailto:lattanzm@neo-rls.org)

*We will dive a little deeper into the actionable strategies for libraries to support the science of reading in their communities. Explore how libraries can integrate the key principles of phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension into programming and services. Learn how to create environments that foster early literacy development for children and caregivers through outreach, storytimes, resources, and other programming. You will leave with a toolkit of ideas and resources to help enhance your library's early literacy efforts.*

### *Learning Objectives:*

*Understand what the science of reading is and what it tells us about how children learn to read*

*Learn how to share literacy messages with families in storytime and other programming*

*Discuss how libraries can support students, families, and schools through collection development and programming*

*\*\*While it's not required, background knowledge of the Every Child Ready to Read program is encouraged or attending an Early Literacy 101 workshop in the past would be helpful. The EL101 (ECRR) workshop goes over the six early literacy skills which are also the main components behind the science of reading.*

*The afternoon will consist of a round-table discussion of storytimes and sharing. Bring your best storytime to share with the group. Be prepared to share a storytime with a small group at your table.*

### *Presenter:*

*Julia Shaheen is the Literacy Manager at Stark Library where she oversees the Ready for School program. Through this program, staff visit parents and caregivers to help prepare families for school. She oversees library literacy efforts by providing staff, parent, and educator workshops. She is an Every Child Ready to Read and Reimagining School Readiness trainer presenting workshops throughout Ohio. She provided storytime and other programming in both in-person and virtual capacities. She holds a Master of Arts degree in Education as well as several certificates in reading and early literacy education. She has presented at numerous regional, state and national conferences. She also presents for local schools and organizations and represents Stark Library on radio and television programming.*

October 21, 2025

## **Holding My Own: Lessons Learned as a Neurodivergent Library Leader**

**Online via Zoom**

02:00 PM - 03:15 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,

[lattanzm@neo-rls.org](mailto:lattanzm@neo-rls.org)

*Neurodivergent librarians face unique challenges in the workplace, particularly as they climb the leadership ladder. In this honest and straightforward conversation rooted in her real-world experiences, Librarian and Accessibility Consultant Renee Grassi discusses lessons learned, navigating her nearly twenty years in libraries and thirteen years in management and administration. Whether you are a neurodivergent library leader yourself or supervise one as a Board Trustee, Director, or Manager, leave this presentation with new perspectives about the strengths and challenges of your neurodivergent peers and recommendations for advocacy and support.*

### *Learning Objectives:*

*Attendees will increase awareness about relevant language and information to discuss disabilities and neurodiversity through the lens of the speaker's personal lived experiences.*

*Attendees will understand the benefits of a strengths-based person-centered approach to supporting, managing, and supervising neurodivergent library leaders.*

*"Attendees who identify as neurodivergent will leave with at least 5 strategies to assist themselves with being a neurodivergent leader."*

### *Presenter:*

*Renee Grassi, Librarian and Accessibility Consultant Speaker*

*Librarian, author, trainer, administrator, teacher, and consultant Renee Grassi is an advocate for equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in libraries, schools, and communities. As a neurodivergent librarian herself, Renee has worked in public libraries for nearly twenty years, developing award-winning library initiatives that welcome, support, and welcome disabled re*

October 22, 2025

## **Chair Yoga for Library Workers: Embodying Compassion**

**Online via Zoom**

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Hillary Brown,

hillary.brown@neo-rls.org

*Reconnect with yourself and others through this gentle chair yoga class centered on the theme of compassion. Using mindful movement, breath awareness, and guided reflection, we'll explore how compassion, for ourselves and those around us, can support emotional balance, reduce stress, and promote a greater sense of connection.*

### **Learning Objectives:**

*Practice gentle, accessible movements and breathwork techniques that support a calm and compassionate state of mind.*

*Explore the concept of embodying compassion through awareness and self-reflection.*

*Identify simple ways to integrate compassion-focused practices into daily life to support emotional well-being and stress reduction.*

### **Presenter:**

*Hillary Brown, Program and Services Associate, NEO-RLS, is also a certified yoga teacher and former children's librarian with over a decade of experience in public libraries. She specializes in making yoga accessible to all and is passionate about supporting the well-being of library workers through mindful movement, meditation and breath work. Hillary believes that, like libraries, yoga should be welcoming to everyone.*



## **Safe Space - LGBTQ+ Cultural Competence Training**

**Twinsburg Public Library**

**10050 Ravenna Rd.**

**Twinsburg, OH 44087**

**09:30 AM - 12:30 PM EST**

Melissa Lattanzi,

[lattanzm@neo-ris.org](mailto:lattanzm@neo-ris.org)

*LGBTQ+ Cultural Competence Training is designed to foster safer, more inclusive communities for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. This training equips participants with the knowledge and tools to recognize and address bias, understand current terminology, and engage in respectful and informed conversations around gender and sexuality. Upon completion, participants are invited to display a Safe Space Ally sign in their workspace—demonstrating visible support for the LGBTQ+ community and a commitment to inclusion.*

*No matter where you work or live, if you interact with others, you're likely to engage with individuals who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. Having a foundational understanding of inclusive language and what it means to be a supportive ally isn't just helpful—it's essential for fostering respect, equity, and belonging for everyone.*

### **Learning Objectives:**

*Develop greater self-awareness of personal beliefs, stereotypes, and assumptions related to LGBTQ+ individuals.*

*Increase comfort and confidence in discussing concepts and using inclusive language related to sexual orientation and gender identity.*

*Gain knowledge of resources and services that support LGBTQ+ individuals and their allies.*

*Explore opportunities to build a network of community support that embraces all people, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.*

### **Presenter:**

*Ken Ditlevson is a dedicated trainer and facilitator specializing in LGBTQ+ education and advocacy. He served as the inaugural Director of Kent State University's LGBTQ+ Center, a position he held for nearly 11 years. In this role, Ken led numerous initiatives to support LGBTQ+ students, staff, and faculty, building a more inclusive campus environment. Ken currently serves as the Assistant Dean of Students, and Director of CARES Center at Kent State University.*

*Ken is a two-time graduate of Kent State University, holding a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Master of Education in Community Counseling. Before joining Kent State, he spent nearly two decades working in mental health and social services, most recently serving as Assistant Vice President at Child Guidance & Family Solutions in Akron, Ohio.*

*A passionate advocate, Ken has received numerous awards for his leadership in LGBTQ+ advocacy and for developing innovative programs that foster inclusion and community support. He lives in the Highland Square/West Akron area with his husband of 25 years and their two dogs, Luna and Piper.*

October 28, 2025

## **NEO-RLS Open House -Featuring Mychal Threets**

**Hilton Garden Inn**

**8971 Wilcox Dr**

**Twinsburg, OH 44087**

**08:30 AM - 12:00 PM EST**

Melissa Lattanzi,

[lattanzm@neo-rls.org](mailto:lattanzm@neo-rls.org)

*Join Us for NEO-RLS Open House*

*We invite library staff, administrators, and trustees to the NEO-RLS Open House on Tuesday, October 28, 2025. This special event is your opportunity to gain insight into NEO-RLS's financial progress and achievements over the last year, learn about our services and strategic priorities, and receive a special update from the State Library. We'll celebrate the contributions of our members and recognize the 2025 Rising Star, Shooting Star, and Super Star Award recipients. Attendees will also have the opportunity to connect with members of the Board of Trustees, Board Committees, Advisory Groups, and Active Learning Communities to explore ways to get involved. We look forward to celebrating with you and sharing what's next for NEO-RLS!*

*What to Expect at the Open House:*

*Breakfast*

*Time to mingle and network with library staff from across the region*

*Interactive stations to explore ways to get involved with the Board, Advisory Committees, Active Learning Communities, and more*

*A recap of NEO-RLS achievements from the past year*

*An update from the State Library of Ohio*

*Congratulate the Star Award nominees and winners in-person*

*Featured Presentation in-person - A Journey of Library Joy*

*Mychal's thank you and honoring of library staff as a library kid-turned-librarian dealing with life and humanity, while seeking the ever-present joy.*

*Presenter:*

*Mychal Threets is a librarian, literary ambassador, and the library's number one fan (according to himself, admittedly). He grew up in Fairfield, CA, right between Sacramento and San Francisco. He was raised in his local library as a home-school kid.*

*He got his first library card at the age of five and was hooked on libraries from there. He got his first library job as a library shelve at the library he grew up in and worked his way up to become Supervising Librarian of that very same library.*

*He is very open about his mental health. He talks about it in hopes that it'll help others in their mental health journey. He is adamant about encouraging people to believe him when he says he's happy they are here.*

*He considers it an honor to the library people who raised him that he is a recipient of the 2024 "I Love My Librarian" award from the American Library Association, one of School Library Journal's 2024 Movers and Shakers, one of TIME Magazine's 2024 Next Generation Leaders, and a 2025 The Webby Awards winner for social impact."*

October 29, 2025

**Book Discussion Active Learning Community Meeting**

**Online**

**Via Zoom**

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02:00 PM - 03:30 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,

[lattanzm@neo-rls.org](mailto:lattanzm@neo-rls.org)

*We're excited to unveil a fresh approach to professional connection and collaboration. Our traditional networking meetings are now Active Learning Communities—dynamic spaces designed for shared learning, real conversation, and practical support.*

*Join your peers to exchange ideas, celebrate successes, and discover new solutions to common challenges. You'll also get a guided introduction to our new message boards, which will help keep the conversation going long after the meeting ends.*

*This meeting will be held through Zoom which is user friendly to all devices. You will receive a link in your confirmation email a reminder 2 hours before the meeting. We hope you will join us. Please send Carrie Kibby any items you would like to discuss.*

October 30, 2025

## **Thriving at Work: Practical Strategies for Better Days in the Library**

**Online via Zoom**

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,  
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

*Do your work days feel like a blur? Between patron demands, programming pressures, and shifting priorities, it's easy to fall into survival mode. This one-hour introductory webinar will offer practical strategies to help you reconnect with what you love about library work. We'll explore how to manage time and tasks, navigate workplace conflict, and rediscover purpose in your daily routine—so you can thrive, not just get through the day.*

### *Learning Objectives:*

*How to identify and reframe the parts of your job you enjoy.  
Practical tips for managing time and tasks to reduce overwhelm.  
A glimpse into resolving common workplace conflicts.  
A foundation for thriving in your role and setting the stage for future growth*

### *Presenter:*

*Crystal Trice, CSM, CSM@Scale, Library Consultant, Scissors & Glue, LLC  
Crystal Trice, founder of Scissors & Glue, LLC, has over 20 years of experience in education and local government, with a focus on improving collaboration and handling challenging situations with patrons and coworkers. She is passionate about creating environments where people work together more effectively.*

*With certifications as a Scrum Master and in Scrum at Scale for Government, Crystal holds a Master's in Library & Information Science and a Bachelor's in Elementary Education and Psychology. Her dedication to community enrichment fuels her work in supporting organizations to achieve their goals.*

*Crystal lives near Portland, Oregon, and enjoys organizing her thoughts (and tasks) with Sharpies, Flair pens, and sticky notes. She shares her home with her husband and a quirky mix of animals.*

October 30, 2025

## **Construction and Facilities Active Learning Community Meeting**

**Online via Zoom**

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,  
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

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November 4, 2025

## **Time Management: Eliminating Time Wasters and Staying Organized**

**Online via Zoom**

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,  
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

*Time leaks can sabotage even the most productive days. In this session, participants will uncover the sneaky time wasters—both digital and interpersonal—that interrupt their focus and flow. They'll also learn how to manage interruptions with tact and clarity. Beyond identifying distractions, we'll explore systems to organize tasks, emails, and workspace for smoother, more efficient days. This training is perfect for anyone ready to reclaim their time and build sustainable habits for staying organized and in control.*

### **Learning Objectives:**

*Recognize the top time-wasting habits in your workday  
Learn strategies to manage and minimize interruptions  
Discover tools to improve organization and workflow  
Build a personalized strategy to reduce distractions and boost efficiency*

### **Presenter:**

*Amy B. Shannon, President, Pinnacle Leadership Solutions, LLC, and a Partner in Your Partner in HR has specialized in Organizational Development, Human Resources and Training for over 25 years. For the past 13 years, Amy has been an Organizational Development consultant working with clients in manufacturing, service, financial and healthcare industries. Most recently, Amy served as the Executive Director II/Vice President of Corporate College where she built robust leadership training curriculum to serve her clients. Amy also holds certifications with numerous nationally known training vendors. She is a regular speaker at national conferences such as The Corporate University Week at the Disney Institute. She is a seasoned speaker for the HR Star Conference Cleveland. As a result of her high ratings, she has also been a key speaker at the HR Star Atlanta and received the Gold Medal Award three years in a row for best session speaker. Amy was a recipient of the 2015 HR Awards presented by ERC & CSHRM.*

November 4, 2025

## **Adult Services Active Learning Community Meeting**

**Online via Zoom**

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,  
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

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*Join your peers to exchange ideas, celebrate successes, and discover new solutions to common challenges. You'll also get a guided introduction to our new message boards, which will help keep the conversation going long after the meeting ends.*

*This meeting will be held through Zoom which is user friendly to all devices. You will receive a link in your confirmation email a reminder 2 hours before the meeting. We hope you will join us. Please send agenda items/questions to Melissa Lattanzi.*

November 6, 2025

## **Storytime Beyond the Basics: Virtual Panel Discussion**

**Online via Zoom**

02:00 PM - 03:30 PM EST

Hillary Brown,

hillary.brown@neo-rls.org

*Join us for Storytime Beyond the Basics, a virtual panel discussion for early childhood educators and library staff looking to enhance their programming. Our panelists will share practical strategies for adapting songs and rhymes, using felt and props creatively, and setting up your space to reflect the needs of your unique community. The session will include a live Q&A so bring your questions and ideas!*

### *Learning Objectives:*

*Identify strategies for adapting songs and rhymes to reflect diverse communities, different age groups and developmental needs.*

*Explore creative ways to incorporate props to enhance engagement and storytelling.*

*Apply practical tips for creating storytime environments that are welcoming, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of their specific community.*

November 12, 2025

## **Supporting Neurodivergent Library Users**

**Online via Zoom**

02:00 PM - 03:15 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,

lattanzm@neo-rls.org

*How can you create neuroinclusive library experiences for your users? This presentation will discuss ways to make programs, collections, and services more accessible for neurodivergent people. Leave with ideas for how to create a welcoming environment at your library and an understanding of how to support neurodivergent people across the age span.*

### *Learning Objectives:*

*Attendees will understand relevant language and information to discuss disabilities and neurodiversity.*

*Attendees will gather at least five strategies to make their approach to customer service more welcoming to neurodivergent users.*

*Attendees will learn at least five ideas to make library programs, collections, and services more inclusive to neurodivergent users*

### *Presenter:*

*Renee Grassi, Librarian and Accessibility Consultant Speaker*

*Librarian, author, trainer, administrator, teacher, and consultant Renee Grassi is an advocate for equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in libraries, schools, and communities. As a neurodivergent librarian herself, Renee has worked in public libraries for nearly twenty years, developing award-winning library initiatives that welcome, support, and welcome disabled residents and their families and caregivers. Learn more at [reneegrassi.com](http://reneegrassi.com).*

November 13, 2025

**Youth Services (Children & Teen) Active Learning Community Meeting**

**Online**

**Via Zoom**

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01:00 PM - 02:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi, 3306550531

[lattanzm@neo-rls.org](mailto:lattanzm@neo-rls.org)

*We're excited to unveil a fresh approach to professional connection and collaboration. Our traditional networking meetings are now Active Learning Communities—dynamic spaces designed for shared learning, real conversation, and practical support.*

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*This meeting will be held through Zoom which is user friendly to all devices. You will receive a link in your confirmation email a reminder 2 hours before the meeting. We hope you will join us. Please send agenda items/questions to Melissa Lattanzi.*



## **Building Strong Volunteer Programs: Library & Friends Group Perspectives**

**Online via Zoom**

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,  
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

*Join us for a practical and engaging webinar designed for library staff and administrators seeking to enhance their recruitment, retention, and management of volunteers. This session offers a dual perspective: Debbie will discuss best practices and lessons learned from managing a successful in-library volunteer program, while Gloria will share insights on engaging volunteers through a Friends of the Library group.*

*Together, we'll explore how strong volunteer engagement can enhance library services, support special events, and deepen community connections. Whether you're just starting a volunteer program or seeking to revitalize an existing one, this session will provide strategies, tools, and inspiration to build a program that works.*

### **Learning Objectives:**

*Recognize key components of a successful library volunteer program, from onboarding to recognition.*

*Compare volunteer engagement through the library system and Friends group to determine the best fit for their organization's needs.*

*Apply recruitment and retention strategies tailored to diverse volunteer motivations and schedules.*

*Implement practical approaches to volunteer management, including communication, training, and task design.*

*Leverage community partnerships and internal support to grow and sustain volunteer initiatives.*

### **Presenters:**

*Gloria Brach, Foundation Member and Friends Committee Co-Chair, Geauga County Public Library*

*Gloria worked in public education for 40+ years as a Teacher, Guidance Counselor, Administrator, Curriculum Director and Special Education Coordinator. All of these positions afforded her the opportunity to work closely with teachers, parents and students. Reading for her profession and pleasure has always been very important to Gloria. Upon retirement, she became involved as a volunteer for the Geauga County Library. Now she gets to work with amazing volunteers who share a passion for books and literacy! Helping patrons choose a new author or explore an unknown area to read about at a book sale excites her! Gloria enjoys welcoming new volunteers to the organization and getting them involved.*

*Debbie Schrock is the Development Coordinator for the Geauga County Public Library and has been involved in libraries since she was 16. She began volunteering at the Burton Log Cabin at age 12, sparking a lifelong passion for service. Debbie earned her Bachelor's degree in Technical and Applied Studies with a concentration in Business Management from Kent State University. She is deeply committed to volunteerism and believes in the power of community engagement to strengthen and support library services.*

November 18, 2025

### **IT Active Learning Community Meeting**

**Online via Zoom**

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Hillary Brown,

hillary.brown@neo-rls.org

*We're excited to unveil a fresh approach to professional connection and collaboration. Our traditional networking meetings are now Active Learning Communities—dynamic spaces designed for shared learning, real conversation, and practical support.*

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*This meeting will be held through Zoom which is user friendly to all devices. You will receive a link in your confirmation email a reminder 2 hours before the meeting. We hope you will join us. Please send agenda items/questions to Hillary Brown.*

November 24, 2025

### **Chair Yoga for Library Workers: Practicing Gratitude**

**Online via Zoom**

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Hillary Brown,

hillary.brown@neo-rls.org

*As we prepare for the winter season, take time to slow down and reconnect with what grounds you. This gentle chair yoga class combines mindful movement, breathwork, and guided reflection to help you develop a gratitude practice that supports stress relief and overall wellness. Discover how focusing on gratitude can calm the mind, ease tension, and boost resilience during the colder months.*

#### *Learning Objectives:*

*Learn gentle seated movements and breathwork techniques to support relaxation and reduce stress.*

*Explore the benefits of gratitude as a wellness practice, particularly during the shorter days of winter season.*

*Develop simple, sustainable ways to incorporate gratitude into your daily routine.*

#### *Presenter:*

*Hillary Brown, Program and Services Associate, NEO-RLS, is also a certified yoga teacher and former children's librarian with over a decade of experience in public libraries. She specializes in making yoga accessible to all and is passionate about supporting the well-being of library workers through mindful movement, meditation and breath work. Hillary believes that, like libraries, yoga should be welcoming to everyone.*

December 2, 2025

### **Guided Reading Round Table (GRRT): Historical Literary Fiction**

**Online via Zoom**

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,  
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

*Modeled off the Chicago-area Adult Reading Round Table, the Guided Reading Round Table (GRRT) will lead library staff through an in-depth genre study. Over the course of a year, we will explore historical fiction, with a specific focus on the biographical, fantasy, literary, mystery, and romance subgenres. This penultimate session will explore historical literary fiction through guided discussions to identify popular authors, titles, tropes, & trends. A reading list & questions will be supplied; while it is not required, it is recommended to read through some of the titles and questions. The GRRT is dedicated to the development of readers' advisory skills and the promotion of reading for pleasure.*

December 4, 2025

### **You're Not Alone: The Power of Peer Support in Management**

**Online via Zoom**

10:00 AM - 11:30 AM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,  
lattanzm@neo-rls.org

*Becoming a manager is a significant step, bringing exciting new challenges and shifts in how you approach your work yet, it often comes with a surprising sense of isolation. The familiar camaraderie with coworkers fades, leaving you feeling alone when navigating tough decisions or problem-solving. This feeling is especially true for middle managers, who often find themselves caught balancing the needs of front-line staff with the directives of administration. In this interactive workshop, we'll dive into the key issues faced by managers, particularly those in middle management, and explore practical strategies for building stronger peer support. You'll leave the workshop with a clear understanding of the mutual respect, open communication, and shared sense of purpose needed for robust peer relationships. You'll also be equipped with actionable strategies to cultivate an environment where you and other managers can freely share experiences, learn from one another, and collaboratively find solutions that benefit everyone.*

#### **Learning Objectives:**

*Have a clear understanding of the mutual respect, open communication, and shared sense of purpose*

*Cultivate an environment of sharing, learning, and collaborating*

#### **Presenter:**

*Mary Frankenfield has worked in the Mansfield/Richland County Public Library system for more than 20 years. During her time at MRCPL, Mary has worked as a page, a clerk, a children's librarian, and a branch manager. She has been in her current position as Deputy Director for a little over seven years. Among her many other duties, Mary has an active role in employee training and development and has presented workshops for NEO-RLS, OLC, and the*

December 9, 2025

**Outreach Active Learning Community Meeting**

**Online**

**Via Zoom**

,

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,

[lattanzm@neo-rls.org](mailto:lattanzm@neo-rls.org)

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*This meeting will be held through Zoom which is user friendly to all devices. You will receive a link in your confirmation email a reminder 2 hours before the meeting. We hope you will join us. Please send agenda items/questions to Melissa Lattanzi.*

## **The Power of Storytelling and Empathy-Centered Communication**

**Online via Zoom**

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,

[lattanzm@neo-rls.org](mailto:lattanzm@neo-rls.org)

*Storytelling and empathetic communication are powerful, often underestimated tools in marketing and outreach. Centering empathy for your patrons' needs and experiences in your communication strategies will enhance the efficacy of your reach and will help you better understand who you're serving. Applying storytelling best practices alongside empathy-centered communication will ensure you're drawing in your audience meaningfully and sustaining their engagement, and your patrons will better understand how your library can meet their needs. Stories also will help your key stakeholders, such as funders and legislators, understand the value of your library. You'll leave this session with clear communication strategies and tools that simultaneously support your community and your services.*

*Learning objectives:*

*Identify your unique audiences.*

*Understand how to better communicate how your library can meet your audience's needs.*

*Gain confidence in interviewing and storytelling.*

*Presenter:*

*Deborah Hakes leads marketing and communications for Georgia Public Library Service, which was named Library Journal's 2020 Marketer of the Year. She is a communications leader with expertise in storytelling and building brands for nonprofits, public health, and libraries. Hakes has served on the board for the Library Marketing and Communications Group since 2021, including currently as vice president.*

*She has a passion for amplifying the voices of those who do good and telling stories that drive people to take action and has spent her career at state, national, and globally-focused nonprofit organizations. She began her career at The Carter Center in former U.S. President Jimmy Carter's communications office, telling stories and raising awareness of international programming. At Welcoming America, she built the communications department from the ground up for a growing, new nonprofit. Currently at Georgia Public Library Service, she works to broaden awareness of the value of public libraries to build engagement and support, and she provides counsel to libraries to build their own communications expertise.*

December 10, 2025

**Special Libraries Active Learning Community Meeting**

**Online via Zoom**

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Hillary Brown,

hillary.brown@neo-rls.org

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*This meeting will be held through Zoom which is user friendly to all devices. You will receive a link in your confirmation email a reminder 2 hours before the meeting. We hope you will join us. Please send agenda items/questions to Hillary Brown.*

December 11, 2025

## **Life Art: A New Horizon, Library Edition**

**Online via Zoom**

02:00 PM - 03:15 PM EST

Melissa Lattanzi,

[lattanzm@neo-rls.org](mailto:lattanzm@neo-rls.org)

*This presentation will plumb the depths of human potential by asking folks, what if we consider our contemporary society through the lens of living life as art? And what if libraries are the perfect synergistically aligned conduits for this enriching energy? What if art has been with us since the dawn of civilization as a gift just waiting to be opened completely and utilized to its fullest extent? What if the concept and practice of living life as art offers us a mind and heart opening portal to better understand the nature of reality and the full capacities that human beings hold within themselves?*

### *Learning Objectives:*

*Learn about the very beginning of art history to our current day and age showing how art has gone through a transformation from object to concept to now possibly people as art*

*Explore how this eureka understanding unlocks an infinite well of powerful energy that can be harnessed to good ends to live one's life in the most inspired and fulfilling way*

*Begin to see how this gift energy can potentially strengthen, support, catalyze, revitalize, renew and supercharge library workers and libraries all around the world*

*Tap into the awesome power of the gift energy that the understanding and practice of life art truly offers and see how it aligns perfectly with the mission, vision and values of libraries*

### *Presenter:*

*Jon Keppel holds a Bachelor of Fine Art in Sound Art from The Ohio State University where he graduated Magna Cum Laude with Distinction and a Master of Library and Information Science from Kent State University with a focus on adult services in the context of public libraries through the lens of living life as art. He is currently a librarian which is how he expresses his life art professionally in addition to independently inspiring through his writings, talks, guided meditations, music, and art.*

December 17, 2025

## **Chair Yoga for Library Workers: Reconnecting**

**Online via Zoom**

02:00 PM - 03:00 PM EST

Hillary Brown,

hillary.brown@neo-rls.org

*The cold winter months can be isolating. Pause and reconnect with your body, mind, and community in this gentle chair yoga class. Through slow, mindful movement and breathwork, you'll cultivate a deeper sense of presence and connection with yourself, your community and the natural world around you.*

### *Learning Objectives:*

*Use gentle movements and breath techniques to enhance physical and mental relaxation.*

*Cultivate a deeper connection to the self through focused awareness.*

*Foster a sense of community and connection by embracing practices that support openness and presence.*

### *Presenter:*

*Hillary Brown, Program and Services Associate, NEO-RLS, is also a certified yoga teacher and former children's librarian with over a decade of experience in public libraries. She specializes in making yoga accessible to all and is passionate about supporting the well-being of library workers through mindful movement, meditation and breath work. Hillary believes that, like libraries, yoga should be welcoming to everyone.*