

REFORMA DE FLORIDA

Noticias del mes/News of the month

Notes from the Editor

June is for Milestones, transitions to new phases.

Pre-k transitions to Kindergarten, K to 1st, 5th to middle school, 8th to high school, 9th to graduation, college to grad school, and on it goes as transitions continue throughout our lives.

ReDeFL will see transitions too as President Lucia steps down (p. 1), newly elected officers join us (p. 2), and I become your new chapter President.

After 6 yrs. as Editor, this will be my last issue. Gaby Gomez will transition into this role in July (p. 3). I know she'll do a great job continuing to bring the best of REFORMA de Florida to you.

It's now time to transition to your seat to read about: How to win \$500 (p. 2), The ALA Conference (p. 2), Corporate Sponsor *MakeMake Digital Library* (p. 3), FLA Conference Recap (p.4-7), *Lo-que-leo* book picks (p. 7-8), *Latineando's* creative ways to celebrate summer (p. 8-9), and *Bibliotele's* new arrivals (p. 9-11.) Enjoy!

Alma Ramos-McDermott (2020-2026 Editor) has left the building...



President's column

by Lucia M. Gonzalez

As I write my final President's Message for the REFORMA de Florida Chapter newsletter, I would like to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude to the 2025–2026 Board members for their leadership, resourcefulness, and vision in guiding the organization's work, implementing innovative programs, and expanding the reach and impact of our chapter.

As we look ahead, I would also like to congratulate this year's newly elected officers, Vice President/President-Elect Eric Gomez and Chapter Treasurer Isabel Castro, who will serve on the 2026–2027 Board of Directors. Thank you both for your willingness to serve and for your continued leadership, dedication, and commitment to REFORMA de Florida. Congratulations and kudos as well to our incoming 2026–2027 President, Alma Ramos-McDermott. Alma has been a driving force in the revival and continuity of our Chapter. I am grateful for her outstanding work and for her leadership as the 2025–2026 Vice President/President-Elect.

We are proud of our membership and thankful to be part of the REFORMA family. A special shout-out to our Corporate members! We look forward to continuing to highlight their products and services, which focus on the information and recreational needs of our Latino communities.

“The Times They Are A-Changin’” and, in today's rapidly changing world, our REFORMA de Florida Chapter continues to evolve, seek new partnerships, build networks, and provide access to innovative resources, programming ideas, and more.

I look forward to seeing many of you in June at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago, at the Miami Book Fair, at next year's FLA Conference, or at our monthly virtual Board meetings.

It has been an honor to serve as your 2025–2026 Chapter President.

Congratulations to our 2026-2027 ReDeFL Executive Board Members



Congratulations to Eric Gomez, Community Library Manager at the Pembroke Pines Branch Library/Walter C. Young Resource Center in Pembroke. Eric was elected as Vice President/President-Elect. Congratulations to Isabel Castro, Assistant Director of the West Orange Public Library in New Jersey. Isabel was elected to serve another term as Treasurer. Their terms begin July 1.



Apply to win a \$500 Noche de Cuentos Mini-grant

Members of REFORMA de Florida are eligible to apply for REFORMA National's grants and scholarships. The Mini-grant application cycle for a September-October *Noche de Cuentos* celebration (awarded in August) has officially opened. Members have the opportunity to win one of ten \$500 mini-grants for a *Noche* program.

Noche de Cuentos means "Night of Stories." Oral traditions are a big part of the Latino culture, and this mini-grant is for a *Noche* program with an emphasis on cultural literacy activities. The mini-grant money will be used to hire a storyteller or performer to come to your library to tell stories that celebrate the Latino culture, as well as for decorations, publicity, and material. (Twenty percent of the funds could be used for refreshments.)

Go to the [Noche de Cuentos mini-grant page](#) for more information and to apply for a \$500 mini-grant for a *Noche de Cuentos* program at your library. **Applications are now open.** You must be a member of REFORMA National/REFORMA de Florida to apply. Buena suerte!



The 2026 American Library Association (ALA) Conference is coming! June 25-29

The ALA Conference takes place in Chicago the week of June 25-29. Will you be there? This year ALA turns 150 years old, so some events will be planned around its birthday. Their [Conference Scheduler](#) has more information on all events, locations, dates, and times. Don't forget to sign up for the 150th Anniversary celebration! If you haven't yet [registered](#) you can do so on their website. Discounted Advance rates end June 19.

The Pura Belpré book award turns 30 years old this year, so I'm sure REFORMA will have something up its sleeve at Sunday's Pura Belpré Awards Celebración.

ALA Conference (continued)

Besides ALA's events and speakers, REFORMA also has many events lined up for members and guests, including the JCLC Reception, an Orientation/Information session, the President's Program, *Noche de Cuentos*, our Membership meeting and, of course, the 30th Anniversary Pura Belpré Awards Celebración. Dates, times, and locations are on REFORMA's website.

NOTE: We'll hold our ReDeFL Board meeting from ALA on Friday June 26 at 12:00 EST to welcome new Board members. A ZOOM link will be emailed to members.

Congratulations to Biblioteca Digital MakeMake/ MakeMake Digital Library!!!

by Catalina Holguín, Director

Dear Reformistas:

I am thrilled to announce that MakeMake Digital Library en Español has been recognized with the [2026 American Association of School Librarians \(AASL\) Best Digital Tools for Teaching & Learning Award](#).

We are the only Spanish-language platform to receive this award this year (!!!) I believe this award is a recognition of the importance of including authentic Spanish-language resources in the classroom and in school libraries.



If you are visiting ALA Chicago this summer, the AASL Committee will host a session where they will present the Best Tools of 2026. It's going to be on Sunday June 28, 9:00-10:00 am at the McCormick Center Room W192C.

MakeMake will also be present at Booth 3827, in case you want to drop by!

Editor's note: MakeMake is a Corporate Member of ReDeFL, and is also a 2024 Crossmedia Award Winner in the Bologna Ragazzi Book Fair. Since they are part of our familia, we share their joy.

Passing the REFORMA de Florida Newsletter Torch

by Alma Ramos-McDermott

I've been editing our chapter's newsletter since my role as Chair of the Vision 2020 Task Force which restarted the previously dormant REFORMA de Florida chapter. With my Presidential term beginning on July 1, I'm handing over Editor reins to the very qualified Gaby Gomez, who will take over in July. Gaby has been a member of ReDeFL since 2025, is a library school student, and had been working in an academic library. Her first love is Cataloging so, if you know of any openings in her field in Central Florida, give her a shout out.

Gaby is author of the column "Dear Future Librarian," was a member of the FLA Professional Development Committee for two years, and has been a member of the FLA Communications Committee for the past year. She has 16 years of experience in graphic design, creating graphics for FLA's website and social media with her committee. Gaby has a very impressive portfolio, and I know she'll bring our newsletter to a higher level. When you see Gaby, be sure to thank her for stepping forward to take on this important work for our chapter.

(Photo by FLA photographer. Gaby is on the right. To her right is Marina Morgan, incoming FLA President.)



FLA Pre-Conference recap

by Alma Ramos-McDermott



This was my first FLA Conference, so I was excited to attend. The conference hotel, *Doubletree by Hilton at the Entrance to Universal*, was clean with a delicious, reasonably priced Latino food truck onsite. Since I liberated myself (retired) last June, I had extra days to explore Universal as I'd never been there.



I had a 2-day pass and walked from the hotel. After 15 min. I reached the Valet entrance but couldn't find the Hogwarts Express. It turns out I was in CityWalk, no ticket needed to visit restaurants and stores. Once in Universal, I made a beeline for the train. I'm a huge Potter fan and was excited to ride it, wandering through Diagon Alley and Hogsmead. I was captivated by the dragon atop the Gringotts bank which sporadically belched fire and roared.

Sadly, it rained heavily both days, so I could only visit a few hours. I'll return in the dry season and try again.



Late Tuesday afternoon I went to *EBSCO's* Happy Hour. Afterwards I ate at the evening Meet-up and met more librarians. At 8 pm, Game Night was held. We sat at tables to play games no one had ever heard of. I met Jenny Abdelnour, hardworking Executive Director of FLA, who played at my table. The four of us focused on strategy, trying to figure out what in the world we were doing, with lots of laughter and good-natured ribbing. (This photo by the FLA photographer shows the top of my head at the front table. Found me?)

FLA Conference recap: Day #1

by Alma Ramos-McDermott



Check out the the AMAZING bags *Bibliotele* (ReDeFL Corporate Member) created for ALL attendees with our logos. It gives a little "commercial" for our upcoming AI series of classes for librarians serving Latino populations. Gracias *Bibliotele*!



Wednesday morning was the *First time Attendees and New Member Orientation Session*, where we sat at tables with signs advertising our library roles. After finding myself alone at the Retiree table, I

loudly sang a line from Eric Carmen's 1975 hit "All by myself" which elicited laughter from the previously quiet group. Committee members, Jenny, and some FLA Board members gave us conference tips, talked about the benefits of membership in FLA, how to join committees, and more.

At the *Opening General Session*, we listened to the interesting and funny ALA President Sam Helmick on ZOOM, as she was too sick to make the trip. There were a couple of others, but I had to run to my room where I'd left my phone charging so missed what they said. Oops!

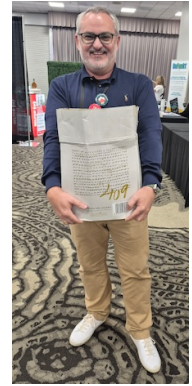
Next, I visited two REdeFL Corporate Members at the Exhibits to see if they needed help. However, both Mariela Diaz (*Spanish Publishers*) and David Padilla (*Bibliotele*) were ready for the coming crowd. I guided David and his huge crate of wine to the

FLA Conference (continued)



registration area, as he was donating it to FLA for the upcoming fundraiser Ring-toss at the President's party. I also stopped at the Merchandise store to purchase conference themed goodies, *(Photo from the FLA Communications Committee).*

Later, I attended the Retiree Happy Hour get-together. I'm a new member of the FLA's "Retired Library Employee Member Group," so it was nice to meet those I'd previously only seen at our ZOOM meetings.



Though I never attended FSU I was invited to their reception that evening, so spent a few hours eating and mingling with alumni. Needless to say, I did poorly on the "How well do you know FSU?" trivia game. Luckily, I was with a team of alumni experts who got all questions correct despite me giving them funny, but very wrong, answers.

FLA Conference recap: Day #2
by Alma Ramos-McDermott



Thursday was the 7 AM Fun Run. No one ran, so I wasn't tempted to re-injure myself as we walked for 35 min. Afterwards, I attended the NALCO (National Association of Librarians of Color) meeting. We introduced ourselves and chatted.

Our in-person REdeFL Membership Meeting was next, which I called a "Meet and Greet." We talked about our chapter history, activities, how to reach

members, and the need for Regional Reps. Our hour together flew. Here's a group photo. (Abby had to leave after 10 min. because she was presenting at a 10:15 session.) *I'm a terrible selfie-taker, and would love to know how to fit myself into the camera. Suggestions?*



After a delicious food truck lunch I attended the "Retired, Not Expired" session. Panelists explained why they retired, how to prepare, what to do when pre-retirement plans go awry, and what they're doing now. These retirees, still involved with FLA, reminded everyone they're *Retired, but not Expired*, the theme of our group. I'm liberated 1 yr., and am busier now than when I was working!



That evening the *President's Reception* was held in the ballroom. It had a



Casino theme, with a Flappers and Gangsters costume contest. Casino tables and official looking Dealers were scattered throughout the room. Everyone was given \$5000 in play money with opportunities to win more by playing Blackjack, Poker, 21, Craps, Roulette, and other table games. Those (like myself) who had no idea what to do were coached by



friendly Dealers. *(Casino photos are from FLA's photographer. Notice familiar faces on the right?)*

FLA Conference (continued)

Money was tossed to those dancing to the DJ's tunes or forming a conga line. While dancing and casino activities were going on, attendees tossed rings at bottles of wine. Whatever you "caught" was yours. Everyone received a free ring with more available to purchase. I didn't win David's wine, but "caught" one from Trader Joe's. Another table sold tickets to the FLA fundraiser for lavishly decorated baskets of treats. All attendees had a free ticket, and could buy more.



When the call came for costumes to be judged, I joined other Flappers and Gangsters strutting the runway. When the dust cleared I won First Place Flapper, earning a Starbucks gift card. A nattily dressed Gangster (who I'd met at Game Night) came in Second.

It was a great night filled with laughter, music, singing, cheering, playing, and getting to know ReDeFL and FLA members. Kudos to out-going FLA President Allison Grubbs, Broward County Library Director, for coming up with this excellent Presidential Party Theme.



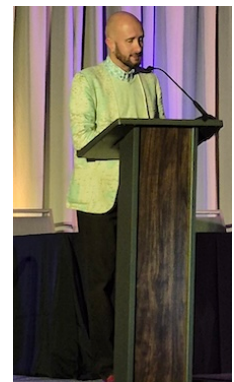
FLA Conference recap: Day #3

by Alma Ramos-McDermott

Friday's first session was led by David Padilla who gave a history of *Bibliotele*. He noted that, besides movies and documentaries, they offer educational programming created specifically for Latino users. This includes information on immigration, health, education, and more. He reminded us Latino communities are here, but being here is not the same as being engaged.



Santiago Villegas took the stage after David. Santi is from Columbia and is an AI expert. He works for *Bibliotele*, and created a network of Latin American Librarians trained in AI. Santi shared that AI courses on different topics would soon be available to librarians serving Latino populations through a collaboration with REdeFL. He hopes to create a network of U.S. librarians trained in AI who work with Spanish populations, similar to what exists in Latin America.



The Closing session was an Awards Luncheon and FLA Board Induction Ceremony. I was proud to see Sarah Romero, REdeFL student member, called up as the winner of the *Kimberly Amos-Tata FSU iSchool Scholarship*. Congratulations Sarah! (Photos to the left and right are from FLA's photographer.)



New President Marina Morgan introduced her theme for the 2027 Conference: "*AI in Libraries, Friend, Foe, or Future?*" The Conference will be held May 11-14 at the Doubletree Hilton Orlando Theme Park Resort.



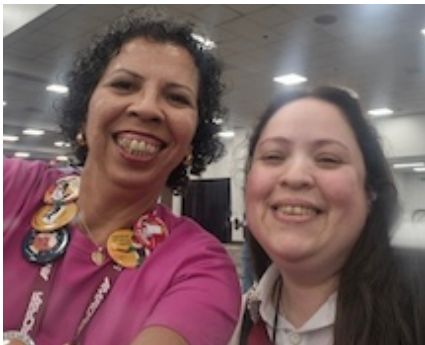
FLA Conference (continued)

I can't wait to see program ideas for this theme!

The last item on my agenda was the FLA Board meeting. Thanks to Past-President Maria Vega's lobbying, every ReDeFL President holds an ex officio, non-voting, seat on the Board. Lucia is a member of the Board until ALA ends, when my Presidential term begins. However, upon invitations from Jenny and Marina, I attended the meeting. I look forward to learning more about FLA and sharing the work of ReDeFL with them.

I hope you enjoyed your whirlwind tour through the 2026 FLA Conference, and hope to see you in 2027. If you come, take a selfie with me. Maybe you'll be the tutor I need to get better! PS: I was happy to meet members Abby, Alejandra, and Ximena in person, as I'd previously only met them on e-mail. All are involved with FLA committees. *(That's just a short step over to a REFORMA de Florida committee. Just saying..)*

Abby (photo 1) is with the FLA Communications Committee. Alejandra (photo 2) just finished a term as Chair of the DEIA Committee. Ximena (photo 3) volunteered at the Conference Merchandise booth. Thank you all for your hard work!



LO-QUE-LEO!
Welcome to the Book Sharing Corner
by Lucia M. Gonzalez



This month's favorite reads will stay with me for a long time and will become permanent recommendations on my list to share with friends and colleagues. I can't wait to have fun with my pick for reading aloud, **No me tigres**!

For children:

No me tigres, de Nane Garcia Contreras Martinez. A buen paso editorial S.L. (Distributed in the US by Spanish Publishers, LLC.). Ages 6 and up.

Liebre or libre? bola or loba? jilguero o ligero? culpa or pulga? Children who have a command of the Spanish language will immediately connect and enjoy the clever transposition of syllables within the context of the story in **No me tigres.** This is a delightful book in which the protagonist overcomes fears through creative and transformative word choices. Readers enjoy playing with words, guessing the original ones, and appreciating the images and colors that accompany her journey of learning to set boundaries and stand up for herself. It's great for reading aloud or classroom use for ages 6 and up.

Lo-que-leo (continued)

For Adults:

***Mi nombre es Emilia Del Valle* / My Name is Emilia Del Valle**, de Isabel Allende. Vintage Español / Penguin Random House, 2025.

If you enjoy historical fiction, Isabel Allende is a true master of the genre. She writes with elegance and power, blending remarkable historical accuracy with elements of myth and magical realism. Last month, I reread **La casa de los espíritus** and recommended it in this column. Now, Allende's most recent novel, **Mi nombre es Emilia del Valle / My Name is Emilia del Valle,** reconnects us with the del Valle family from her debut. The story opens in late 19th-century San Francisco and is narrated by Emilia, a strong-willed, fierce, and independent heroine. She embarks on a tumultuous journey to discover her identity and roots in war-torn Chile, where she serves as a U.S. war correspondent during the country's bloodiest civil war. Born of a relationship between a novice nun and a wealthy Chilean seducer, Gonzalo Andres Del Valle. Emilia is as determined to find her biological father in Chile as she is to report on the war. The English translation is impeccable and remains highly faithful to the original Spanish version.

Latineando

by David Hernandez Rivero

Saludos a todos los reformistas de Florida.



Summer has profound symbolism among numerous cultures: growth and abundance, as well as spiritual renewal and transformation. Since time immemorial, people gathered in religious and cultural festivals to celebrate the importance of summer in their lives. Some examples of this are solstice festivals, music events, sports tournaments, dancing, and carnival among others.

Literature and art celebrated the beauty of summer by portraying the symbolic impact it has on our emotions and psyche. Some of the most common themes in literary work surrounding summer are love and romance, happiness and joy, adventure and exploration, growth and maturity, and relief and vacation. Writers and visual artists create and recreate the beauty of summer by depicting the blossoming of vegetation, the abundance of colors, and the energy of life. Cuban writer Reynaldo Arenas expressed his admiration for his native island Cuba and its tropical colors when he said, "Summer is my favorite color." Summer is magic, life, love, growth, adventure, and excitement.

Will all that being said, let's welcome another Summer Reading program in our South Florida Libraries.

Librarians love summer, not only for its beauty but also for the professional potential to impact communities of people through programs and resources. Librarians seek to meet our community's intellectual and cultural needs. We are proud of becoming that special place where families, adults, and children feel the magic of adventure and exploration during summer vacations.

Our mission is to educate and incentivize a love for knowledge and intellectual curiosity through fun programming and events. Every year libraries create excellent summer reading programs full of events, prizes, festivals, STEM classes, and many other exciting events. Summer programs are not only for children and families but for all; teens and adults will also enjoy good programs and learning opportunities.

Our summer theme this year is *"Unearth a Story,"* which focuses on discovering the world through adventures, incorporating exciting themes such as the legendary dinosaurs of our remote geological past, archeological discoveries of old civilizations, as well as nature, and local history.

Latineando (continued)

Among great programming ideas for children and families are STEAM sessions about dinosaurs, archeology, paleontology, and other natural sciences. In my library we created STEAM programs that feature a paleontological experience where kids will unearth fossils. We baked fossils following a recipe found on YouTube and shared by a librarian. This year, a local archeology office based at Florida International University is doing a STEAM seminar for kids showing them the principles of real excavation and artifacts.

Summer is a great time to have kids involved in arts and crafts seminars and classes. Numerous great ideas for such programming are drawing and painting dinosaurs, or making miniature dioramas featuring ancient Jurassic landscapes. What about making dinosaur puppets?!

Partnering with local institutions, universities, local history, children's museums, and science museums can be beneficial for libraries. These institutions might carry numerous programs such as local history presentations, archeology seminars, paleontology demonstrations, etc. A show about minerals and crystals is a great program library users will appreciate. The summer theme of unearthing stories is also an invitation to create fun programs such as "unearthing talent shows," including escape rooms, or mystery scavenger hunts for teens and kids.

We could also include multicultural programs such as the celebration of native cultures, as well as festivals and concerts featuring Andes Latin or Indigenous. Numerous associations such as the Morikami museums might partner with you to bring artists or musicians that represent other cultures. Programs using VR creating virtual trips to famous archeological places and monuments such as the pyramids in Chichen Itza and Egypt, or Stonehenge in England are all good choices for programs.

Do not forget to use all this creativity to create great displays combining arts and crafts, and books. Your customers will appreciate a beautiful, decorated library inviting us all to celebrate the magic of summer.

Let's have the best summer, unearthing plenty of stories.

(Latineando will be on vacation for the month of July, and will return in August.)

***Corporate Member Bibliotele June Highlights:
A Catalog in Constant Motion
Fresh arrivals for the summer season
by Javier Hidalgo***

From Brad Pitt and Liam Neeson to Marina Abramović and Jackie Chan, this month's premieres bring together **internationally recognized figures and stories that move between spectacle and introspection**. Whether viewers seek gripping entertainment or films that open doors to other cultures and ideas, **Bibliotele always offers something for every kind of audience and every kind of summer viewing**.

Epic adventures, intimate documentaries, philosophical dramas, and tense crime thrillers coexist in a selection that reflects the variety that continues to shape the Bibliotele experience.



New This Month

Killing Them Softly *Feature Film · United States · 2012*

Following a robbery that destabilizes the criminal underworld, a professional enforcer is hired to restore order in this **dark and sharply political crime drama starring Brad Pitt**. Set against the backdrop of the 2008 financial crisis, the film transforms the gangster genre into a bleak reflection on capitalism, power,

Bibliotele (continued)
and institutional decay.



Dragon Blade *Feature Film · China, Hong Kong · 2015*

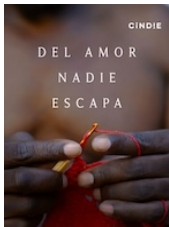
Set along the Silk Road and starring an **international cast that includes Jackie Chan, John Cusack, and Adrien Brody**, this **epic historical adventure** blends large-scale action with a fascinating reimagining of the ancient connections between Eastern and Western civilizations.



The Space in Between: Marina Abramovic and Brazil *Documentary · Brazil · 2016*

Renowned performance artist **Marina Abramović embarks on a journey through Brazil** in search of healing, spiritual connection, and artistic renewal.

Moving through rituals, remote landscapes, and moments of introspection, the documentary offers **a rare look into the creative and emotional process of one of contemporary art's most influential figures.**



From Love No One Escapes *Documentary · Brazil · 2022*

Set inside a **Brazilian prison unlike any other, which operates without armed guards**, this documentary follows inmates participating in an innovative rehabilitation system built around trust, accountability, and mutual support, opening an unprecedented door to an alternative to conventional prison systems that offers **the possibility of rebuilding a life from within confinement.**



Bent *Feature Film · United States · 2018*

This noir-inspired thriller follows a disgraced former narcotics officer as he uncovers a network of corruption, conspiracy, and hidden loyalties after his release from prison. **Combining political intrigue with the atmosphere of classic detective cinema**, Bent stars Karl Urban and established Latino figures in Hollywood, Andy García and Sofía Vergara.



Hacker *Feature Film · Denmark · 2019*

When a gifted teenager discovers that the truth about his mother's disappearance has been hidden from him, he becomes entangled in a dangerous world of cyber-surveillance and political secrecy. **This coming-of-age adventure reflects a growing trend in Scandinavian cinema toward sophisticated youth-oriented thrillers.**



Night Train to Lisbon *Feature Film · Germany, Switzerland, Portugal · 2013*

A chance encounter leads a Swiss professor to abandon his carefully ordered life and travel to Lisbon in search of **the mystery behind the life and death of a Portuguese poet dedicated to overthrowing Salazar's dictatorship.** As he pieces together fragments of the writer's past, the film moves through questions of **memory, political resistance, and the lives we might have lived if we had chosen differently.**

Bibliotele (continued)



The Grey *Feature Film · United States, United Kingdom · 2011*

After surviving a plane crash in the Alaskan wilderness, a group of workers faces isolation, extreme weather, and a relentless pack of wolves. Anchored by Liam Neeson's powerful performance, **The Grey evolves beyond survival thriller conventions into a haunting meditation on grief, mortality, and the human instinct to endure.**

All these titles — and many more — are available on Bibliotele, supporting libraries in their cultural programming, community conversations, and seasonal outreach initiatives throughout June.

Corporate members of REFORMA de Florida

Corporate members are an important part of our chapter. Thank you *Bibliotele*, *Cinco Books*, *MakeMake*, *Penguin Random House*, *The Shelf Media*, and *Spanish Publishers* for being part of our chapter!

What's happening?: Northern, Central, or Southern regions

What's happening in your library or region? Email your name, region, title, library name, a short summary of your event, and photos. Your news could grow membership in your region, so we look forward to hearing from you.

Were you forwarded this newsletter but are not yet a member of the Florida chapter of REFORMA National?

To join, go to REFORMA National's Membership page and make sure REFORMA de Florida becomes your local chapter by checking "Florida." We'd love to have you join our familia.

Is your membership expiring?! ***Are you a Member-at-large?***

If you're not sure if your membership is expiring, email us. If you're a REFORMA National **Member-at-large** (not associated with any chapter) and you live in Florida, **join** the **REFORMA de Florida chapter**. Log into your membership account, and check "Florida." That's it! Once you check "Florida," you'll become a member of our familia. It's as easy as that!