

REFORMA DE FLORIDA

Noticias del mes/News of the month

Notes from the Editor

August is upon us, with more hot, humid, and rainy weather. Gaby and David are our featured writers this month.

Gaby interviews first-year MSLIS student Guadalupe Castillo, who would like to work in a public or academic library upon graduation. Read how she juggles full-time schooling with a full-time job, and takeaways she offers her fellow MSLIS student members.

David reminds our more seasoned librarians that August means Back-to-School. He offers practical ways to reach out to your local school community, reminding you to make sure to include Media Specialists in your planned outreach.

Finally, don't forget about the REFORMA National Conference coming in mid-September. Have you registered yet? Check out pg. 7 for more information on how to register.

Alma Ramos-McDermott,
Editor

Dear Future Librarian

by Gaby Gomez



Hi fellow librarians. Picture this: *Mary on a Cross* by Ghost is playing softly in the background, there's a cup of decaf mint tea in my hand (because we're all trying to sleep like responsible adults), and I'm about to

introduce you to someone who inspires me.

Guadalupe Castillo is a first-year MSLIS student at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) and a Senior Library Assistant at the City of Commerce Public Library in Southern California. She's balancing a full-time job with library school like it's no big deal (spoiler: it *is* a big



Photo credits: Jerry Vizcarra

deal), and she somehow makes it look effortless.

Dear Future Librarian (continued)

From embracing her cultural identity as a bilingual Latina to preparing for her first national conference presentation this September, Guadalupe's story is filled with honesty, hope, and the kind of energy we all need in our lives right now.

Please take a moment to introduce yourself to our readers. Where are you from, and what drew you to pursue your MSLIS at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign?

My name is Guadalupe Castillo, and I am a first-year student pursuing my MSLIS at the University of Illinois - Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). I also work full-time as a Senior Library Assistant at the City of Commerce Public Library in southern California. I chose the iSchool at Illinois because it came highly recommended from two alumni who also happened to be Spectrum Scholars. They both completed an MSLIS degree while working full-time, and I'm currently attempting to achieve the same feat. I appreciate how the iSchool staff supports individuals already on a career path and do their best to enhance the experience we have as students.

You're currently finishing your second semester. How has your perspective on librarianship evolved since you started the program?

I have been working in public libraries for the past three years, and now that I've completed my second semester, I understand the importance of an MSLIS degree to be successful as a librarian. Additionally, I learned about how different libraries can be and that the term library includes not only public libraries, but government, archives and museums as well.

The core courses at UIUC have also reaffirmed the idea that facilitating access for our patrons is paramount to our mission as librarians.

As a fellow Reformista, how has your cultural identity shaped your experience in library school so far?

Being a bilingual Latina in library school has definitely made me more aware of my cultural identity and confirmed the benefits of having the ability to communicate with patrons in two languages. This skill set is essential, helps Spanish-speaking patrons feel seen and heard, and provides me with an additional way to communicate with them.

Have you felt represented in your classes or your program? If not, how do you navigate or advocate for that space?

Dear Future Librarian (continued)

Fortunately, I met other individuals in my classes who are also ALA Spectrum Scholars, and this has given me a sense of support while navigating the online classroom. When I do not see myself reflected in the classes I'm in, I make sure I participate in class and connect offline with my professors to ensure I am receiving the necessary support to excel in my program.

What has been your favorite class or project so far in the MSLIS program, and why?

My favorite project for a class has been to create a presentation poster - like what one would submit to present at a conference. The professor mentioned that she selected this assignment for professional development purposes, and we should submit our posters for local or national conferences to expand our professional portfolio. My topic was "Protect Your Peace: The Role of Self-Care to Avoid Burnout in Public Libraries," and I'll be presenting it at the National Reforma Conference this September.

On the flip side, what has been your biggest academic or professional challenge so far, and how did you handle it?

My biggest challenge has been time management. I'm balancing a full-time job and a full-time schedule as a student. I worked closely with my mentors and supervisors to ensure I can strike the right balance between the two and ensure I am excelling as an employee as well as a student. On a personal note, I also have to be really organized, and I live by my online calendar to ensure all my assignments are completed and all my workload is being done in a timely manner.

What's one thing you thought library school would be like... and what was the surprising reality?

I never expected to be in a master's online program. I completed my undergraduate degree in person, and it has been quite an adjustment in the way I work with my classmates and how I interact with my professors. Although I know there are programs I could have attended in person, the online school option has allowed me to keep my job while attending school.

Where do you see yourself after graduation? Are you leaning toward a particular type of library, archive, or information center?

I see myself working in a public or academic library. I am also interested in learning more about international librarianship and would be interested in working abroad once I'm done with school.

Dear Future Librarian (continued)

What's one piece of advice you would give to a Latinx student just starting their MSLIS journey?

One piece of advice I would give to a Latinx student just starting out is don't be afraid to ask questions and network, network, network. Relationship-building is an important skill to have that will carry on to your work in the library world. I have had the opportunity to build relationships with community organizations through my work, and these relationships have been essential in assisting my library in obtaining funds and providing resources to our patrons.

Last but not least:

- Favorite library you've ever visited:

This is a tough one, but the first one that comes to mind is Geisel Library at the University of California, San Diego. I loved that I could see the ocean from the top floor, and it was my favorite place to study.



- A book that changed your life:

In the Time of the Butterflies by Julia Alvarez - It was one of the first books I read where I saw Latina representation.

- Your library/life motto in one sentence:

If I don't know the answer, I'll find someone who can help you.

So, fellow librarians, whether you're reading this between reference desk shifts, in the world's loudest coffee shop, or hiding in the stacks (no judgment), take Guadalupe's journey as your reminder that we're all figuring it out as we go, and that's okay. If she can balance a full-time job, grad school, and presenting at a national conference without turning into a sleep-deprived library ghost, there's hope for all of us. Now go forth, drink your tea (or coffee...or both), and channel a little bit of Guadalupe's unstoppable energy in your library adventures.

!Latineando!

by David Hernandez Rivero



Saludos Reformistas de South Florida.

August is a month of great cultural significance in western culture, drawing some of its attributes from the Greco-Roman tradition. Astrologically, August is a month of renovation, new projects, the birth of ideas, revitalization, and renovation. For us librarians August also means a new school year; kids go back to school, and some will experience school for the first time in their lives.

August creates opportunities for librarians to explore and innovate. Library card drives, school outreach, back-to-school programming, books and art displays, etc. are some exciting ways to celebrate the back-to-school month. Knowing the community and its key players such as schools, non-profit organizations, government institutions, and other agencies is critical before embarking on this adventure. Numerous back-to-school giveaway events might be happening in your community, which open opportunities for outreach where you could advertise your programs and services. You might have some school supplies or summer program leftovers you could give away during your outreaches.

In past years I've had plenty of summer left-over books and some other goodies. Once I have a confirmation date, I collect everything I can take for giveaways. The giveaway outreach is your opportunity to showcase your services and resources. As demographics in our South Florida communities are always changing, you will find people with no public library experience in their countries. Please consider you will also find numerous parents whose first language is not English, and some may not speak it at all. Work on your signage and materials, including bilingual or multilingual materials. These patrons get excited to hear libraries not only check out books, but offer opportunities such as online tutoring, language classes (not only for students but also for family members), physical space for tutoring, printing, scanning, and numerous educational, cultural, and community programs and events. Parents will always have questions for you regarding reading levels, AR (Accelerated Reader), and other related topics, so be prepared!

Latineando (continued)

During the first week, schools have open houses where parents, teachers, administrators, and other staff get together to showcase school resources. During these events the school invites community vendors, including libraries, setting up tables for their partners. This is your opportunity to talk to numerous parents about your library. Make sure you have plans to make new library cards or facilitate the process. It's also a good opportunity to meet school officials, including the Media Specialist who will be your liaison to the school.

Working with the Media Specialist will always be beneficial for the library, the school, and the community. By establishing partner relations with the Media Specialist, you will get future invitations to numerous school events such as science fairs, career days, and others. It is also a great opportunity to coordinate special library events with the Media Specialist such as Reading for the Record, Summer Reading, and others. The critical aspect of our partnership with Media Specialists is sharing information about AR and books that will be assigned during the school year so we could work on expanding our collections to cater for the school's needs.

August is also a good time to make your library beautiful with new displays, decorations, and signage. Make sure you create a nice, welcoming environment for your new patrons. Take time to welcome your new patrons and show them what resources we have.

Reformistas could also be creative by celebrating Latin America's independence days. August is independence months for both Bolivia and Ecuador, and a great opportunity to celebrate their culture.

I will finish with some *Novedades* in the Latino and Spanish Speaking publishing world. *Lata Mafalda in 11 volumes* is a celebration of Quino's Mafalda comic character, a favorite of Latinos for decades. *¿Quién está mintiendo* by Modesto Garcia, a great illustrated book, will delight our Spanish Speaker patrons. *Las Lagrimas de Nerakhis* is a great fantastic story full of myths and fantasy.

Ache to all of you. Until next time.

In the Know: We want to hear from YOU!

What's going on in your Florida library? Readers want to learn about it, to stay "*in the know*."

If you want to contribute to future columns of "*In the Know*," informing members across the state about something going on in your library, send us an email and we'll make sure your event is featured in our next newsletter. Are YOU in the know?

The National REFORMA Conference VIII: September 18-21

Registration for the National REFORMA

Conference VIII is still open. As announced on REFORMA's Facebook page María Hinojosa, Pulitzer Prize winning Journalist, Anchor, and Executive Producer of "*Latino USA*" will give the Opening Session Keynote address. She's amazing!

NRC VIII will be held September 18-21 in beautiful Long Beach California. Once you [register for the conference](#) you will receive a confirmation link with information on getting a room at the host hotel. We hope to see you there!



Are you a Corporate member of REFORMA de Florida?

Corporate members are an important part of our chapter. Send us a photo, business card, or a short blurb about your company for a future newsletter. We want to know more about you!

What's happening in your region?: (Northern, Central, or Southern)

What's happening in your library or region related to our Latino community? Email us your name, region, title, library name, a short summary of your news or event, and any photos. Your news can grow membership in your region, and for our chapter, so we look forward to hearing from you.

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*Is your membership getting ready to expire?
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