



**Sustainable  
Libraries  
Initiative**

# NEWSLETTER

The latest news and updates from the [Sustainable Libraries Initiative](#)



## CONGRATULATIONS, PAULA MICHALAK!

This month we are celebrating our newest Sustainable Library Certification recipient, Paula Michalak. Paula is the district librarian for the [Silver Creek Central School District](#) in Silver Creek, New York. This role gives her a unique perspective and the ability to work with students longitudinally from K-12th grade. Through this role, she has built partnerships throughout the grade levels in the school district. She represents school libraries on the Erie 2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus BOCES School Library System Committee and is a member of the Building Leadership Team at Silver Creek Central School District.

### NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Paula has been able to use these partnerships as opportunities to promote the value of her school libraries and find new avenues for collaboration in the school and the community. Her involvement across all grade levels in her district has given her a broad view of how different research skills could be introduced and reinforced through projects in different grade levels. Through collaborations with other educators in the buildings, Paula has been able to identify connections between research skills being taught at different grade levels and build a more coherent framework to teach these to the students.



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## CONGRATULATIONS, PAULA MICHALAK, CONTINUED

These connections foster collaboration with the teachers and allow Paula to build on the understanding that they have been gaining by seeing this material presented consistently, in grade-level appropriate ways, over many years of instruction. Consistency, familiarity, and building fluency in research techniques give every student a sound foundation for these skills. Students gain validation of the importance of research skills and have a consistent approach that buoys them for continued success. Paula states, “the use of aligned vocabulary between the classroom and the library helps students grow a deeper understanding of content. Students also begin to understand that learning isn't insular, that it branches out into the world and expands upon itself with great understanding as they move through their academic careers.”

Another program highlighted in the work towards Paula's Sustainable Library Certification was the development of an internship program for high school students to gain experience and a better understanding of local career opportunities. Students participated in many fields such as nursing, banking, and operating small businesses. This program fostered connections between her students and their community and continued to raise awareness in and out of the school about the importance of school librarians in the lives of the students. These connections helped students gain experience and valuable references for college and career development. She is currently pursuing a way for the students to receive credits towards graduation for participation in this program.



Danaceus Maybee took part in the Silver Creek CSD internship program working at Northern Chautauqua Federal Credit Union. Picture credit: [observertoday.com](https://www.observertoday.com)

This garnered coverage in [local newspapers](#) and her [school newsletter](#). This program helped students to get to know the opportunities that exist in their community and showed how the school librarian can foster these connections. Becoming certified will have a lasting impact on Paula, her school, and her community. “This process helped me have more dialog with myself, my peers, and my district in order to continue conversations around programming, collection, collaboration, and vertical/horizontal academic alignment.” Through her advocacy and committee work, she has advocated for the library to be a visible partner in many school activities. By continuing this work in the community by bridging students with internship opportunities, she is broadening the perception and reach of school librarians beyond the school buildings and out into the community.



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# SUSTAINABILITY SPOTLIGHT



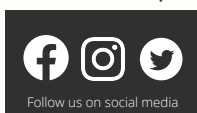
Picture credit: Bee City USA

## "NO MOW MAY," YOU SAY?

*Contributed by Debbie Engelhardt, Director,  
Comsewogue Public Library*

The No Mow May movement started in the UK and has since gained popularity in the U.S. The idea behind it is that bees need spring food after the long winter, and lawn flowers can support a wide variety of bees and their pollinators, whereas short lawns generally provide little food for bees.

Comsewogue Public Library in eastern Long Island is dedicating approximately 900 square feet of its spring lawn to No Mow May for the first time this year. We're curious to see which native wildflowers will thrive in this section throughout the month of May, and which insects we'll observe the feeding. We'll watch, too, to see if more bird species are attracted to the area. The Library will post free signs made available through the Xerces Society to alert the public as to what's happening.



When it is finally time to mow, we'll likely reduce the height of the "shaggy" section in phases and over a few sessions. It's not anticipated that the lawn will be damaged in any way.

Anyone considering No Mow May can embrace it in smaller, more "palatable" ways, perhaps by designating an "island" on their lawn to be left un-mowed, or by leaving a mowed buffer between theirs and a neighboring lawn. How much of a lawn is needed, in general, is a question we'll continue to ask ourselves at the Library. We hope to encourage others to ask themselves the same question and give No Mow May a try at home.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**School Librarian Drop-in Work Session.**

Wednesday, May 4th, 3:00 pm EST

**SLCP Member Meetup.** Thursday, May 5th,  
11 am EST

## MEMBER NEWS

This month we welcome two new libraries to the Sustainable Library Certification Program. Plainedge Public Library has joined from North Massapequa, NY, and Curtis Memorial Library located in Brunswick, Maine.

Plainedge is our first library from Nassau County, NY and Curtis Memorial is our first SLCP enrollment from Maine. We look forward to many more firsts from other states as our national rollout continues. We also welcome two libraries that have joined the Sustainable Libraries Initiative as members. Las Vegas - Clark County Library District in Las Vegas, Nevada, and Valley Cottage Library in Valley Cottage, NY.

