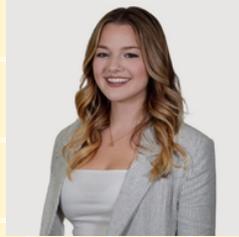


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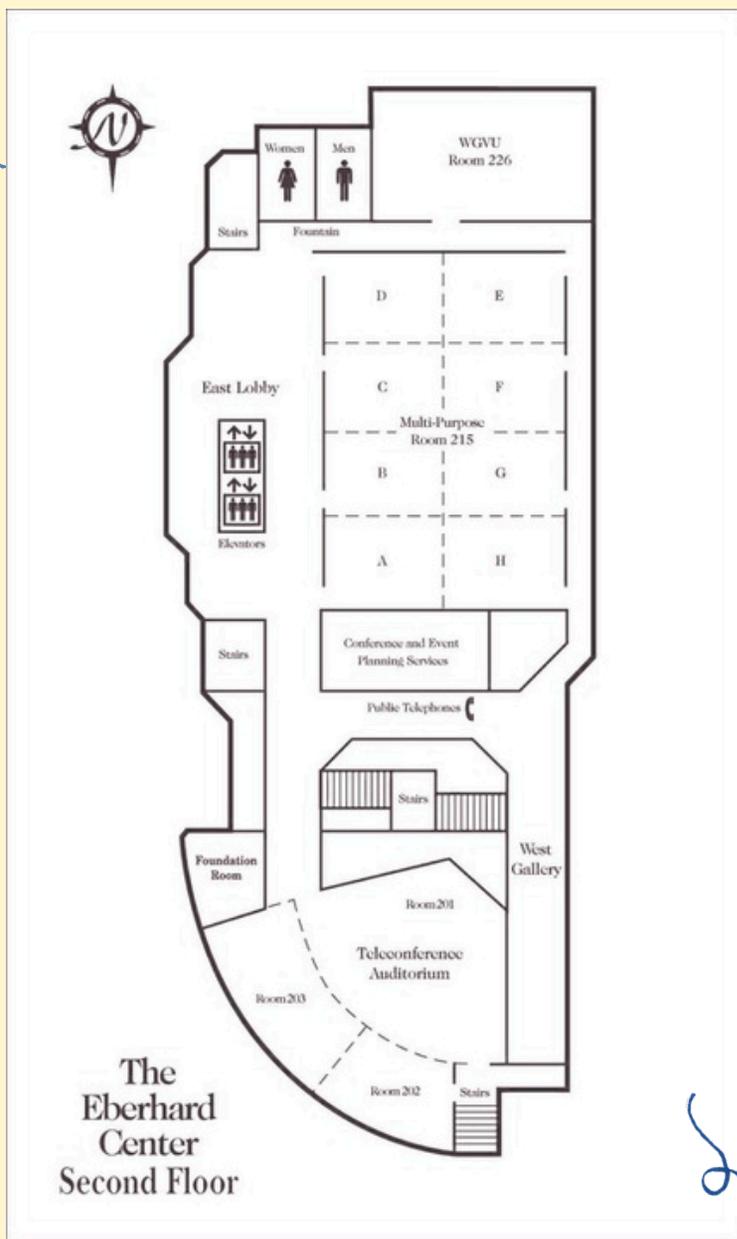
PLAY IT FORWARD

MICHIGAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
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 FOR YOUTH SERVICES



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CONFERENCE VENUE MAP



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18TH

5:00 - 6:00 PM: Registration Open *Holiday Inn Lobby*
6:00 - 8:00 PM: Welcome Reception
Grand Rapids Children's Museum
 11 Sheldon Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

FRIDAY BREAKOUT SESSIONS

2:15 - 3:00 PM

<p>ROOM 201</p>	<p>Yoga Storytime: Bend and Play! Combine stories, yoga, and mindfulness! Learn to lead engaging Yoga Storytimes that get kids moving, breathing, and loving books. <i>*This is a Workshop and requires pre-registration*</i></p>
<p>ROOM 202</p>	<p>Engaging Your Teens with Multiple Volunteer Programs Learn how Troy Public Library has teens assist with and design their own programs through a year long volunteer cohort and Teen Advisory Board.</p>
<p>ROOM 203</p>	<p>Building Community-Based Summers: Rethinking Your "Why" Building Community-Based Summers explores your true "why" of summer and how to align your summer activities with community needs.</p>
<p>ROOM AH</p>	<p>Exploratory Family STEM Play at the Library Learn ideas and methods to create free play and guided play activities at the library to help families build STEM skills, then play with STEM toys.</p>

FRIDAY BREAKOUT SESSIONS

11:45 AM - 12:30 PM

ROOM 201

Baby Storytime Workshop

Build confidence with a complete baby storytime demo and leave with a plug-and-play template for easy, joyful infant programming.

This is a Workshop and requires pre-registration

ROOM 202

How to Run a Successful Nerf Night

Learn tools, tips, and tricks to running a successful library Nerf Night.

ROOM 203

A Successful Model for Circulating Yoto Cards and Players

Small But Mighty: Why the audio collection that fits in your pocket fills a critical need for public library patrons.

ROOM AH

Roots, Rocks, and Wonder: Science Play in Early Childhood

Outdoor science storytimes boost preschool STEAM by pairing books with simple, hands-on exploration. Leave with easy, ready-to-use outdoor activities.

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

THURSDAY, MARCH 19TH

8:00 AM - 4:00 PM: Registration Open

8:00 AM - 3:00 PM: Exhibit Hall Open

8:00 - 9:00 AM: Breakfast

9:00 - 9:15 AM: Welcome Announcements

9:15 - 10:15 AM: **Opening Keynote with Maggie Lancaster**

10:15 - 11:00 AM: Visit with Vendors

11:00 - 11:45 AM: Breakout Sessions

11:45 AM - 1:15 PM: Lunch

1:15 - 1:45 PM: Visit with Vendors

1:45 - 2:30 PM: Breakout Sessions

2:30 - 3:00 PM: Visit with Vendors

3:00 - 3:45 PM: Breakout Sessions

4:00 - 5:00 PM: **Afternoon Keynote with Katie Mann and Annie Clark**

After 5:00 PM: Scavenger Hunt (On Your Own)



FRIDAY, MARCH 20TH

8:00 AM - 4:00 PM: Registration Open

8:00 - 9:00 AM: Breakfast

8:45 - 9:00 AM: Youth Literary Awards Top Ten Announcement

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM: **Morning Keynote with Tony Weaver**

10:00 - 2:15 PM: Non-Profit Partner Fair Open

10:00 - 10:45 AM: Visit with Partners East Lobby

10:45 - 11:30 AM: Breakout Sessions

11:30 - 11:45 AM: Visit with Partners East Lobby

11:45 AM - 12:30 PM: Breakout Sessions

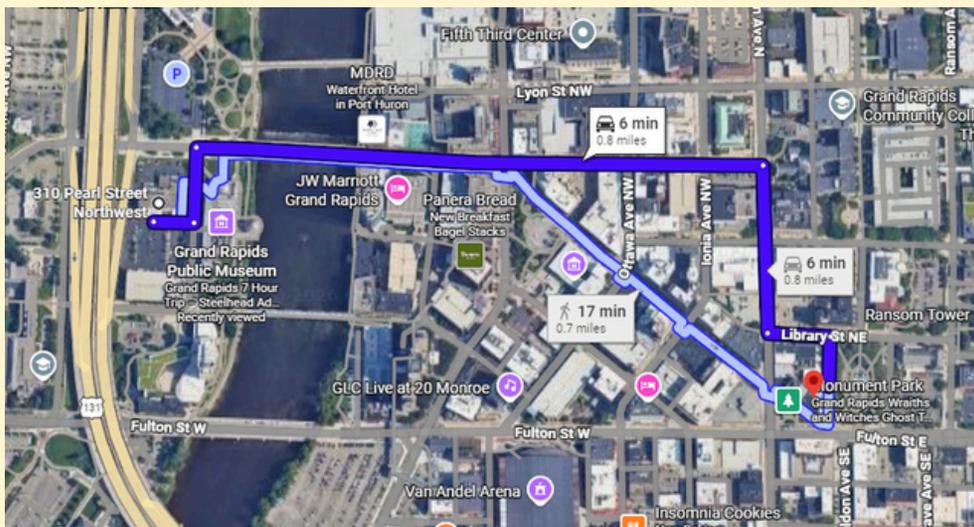
12:30 - 2:00 PM: Trivia Lunch

2:00 - 2:15 PM: Visit with Partners East Lobby

2:15 - 3:00 PM: Breakout Sessions

3:15 - 4:15 PM: **Closing Keynote with Amy Nielander**

MAP FROM HOTEL TO GRCM

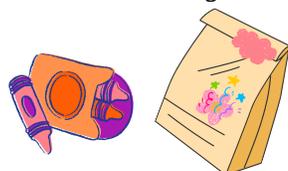


SPRING INSTITUTE GIVES BACK

MLA is proud to support the Boys and Girls Clubs of Grand Rapids and Kids Food Basket for this year's Spring Institute Give Back Program!

BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF GRAND RAPIDS

When you attend please consider bringing an item on their wishlist (access this list using the QR code!) or a monetary donation that MLA will deliver following our conference.



KIDS FOOD BASKET

Provides nutrition to more than 38,000 kids in West Michigan. During Thursday's lunch we will have lunch bags and coloring supplies so the food can come in fun and attractive packaging that helps take the stigma out of the supper sacks!

FRIDAY BREAKOUT SESSIONS

10:45 - 11:30AM

ROOM 201

Playing with Paper! Making Connections through Junk Journaling

Make your own junk journal and learn how the practice of creative reuse and imaginative play fosters the development of essential literacies.

This is a Workshop and requires pre-registration

ROOM 202

Teaching the Power of Difference with Puppets

A puppet show demonstrating how storytelling can teach neurodiversity, support autistic learners, and create sensory-friendly library programs.

ROOM 203

Fear and Play: Building a Not-So-Scary Haunted House

Design a walk-through Not-So-Scary Haunted House! Engage imagination with a creepy, spooky experience designed to delight without fright.

ROOM AH

Community Led Programming

Shape the library with us! "Community Led Programming" encourages patrons to share skills, spark ideas, and co-create exciting, inclusive events.



THURSDAY BREAKOUT SESSIONS

3:00 - 3:45 PM

ROOM 201

Fast Felt: New Techniques for High Quality Flannel Stories

Make and take a layered felt piece for storytime while learning new techniques that make creation faster and easier.

All materials provided.

This is a Workshop and requires pre-registration

ROOM 202

Baby Raves: Glow Up Your Baby Programs!

Learn how to create a dance party program that lights up little learners and delights caregivers.

ROOM 203

Gaming in Libraries: Bridging Educational Gaps for Teens

From cards to board games, libraries use play to bridge learning gaps, boost literacy, and grow social-emotional skills in teens.

ROOM AH

From Dewey to Dirt: Growing a Library Discovery Garden

Lettuce turnip the beet! Learn to create a library garden of any size that inspires learning, healthy eating, and community connection.

FUN EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19TH

6:00 - 8:00 PM

Welcome Reception at the Grand Rapids Children's Museum!



Explore exhibits and imbibe in great food and drinks from a local Grand Rapids caterer!

There is no transportation provided to the GRCM. Attendees may walk or use the free DASH bus provided by the Rapid!

There is also street parking available.

Grand Rapids Children's Museum

11 Sheldon Ave NE

Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Walking: ~15 minutes

Bus: ~25 minutes

Drive: ~5 minutes

THURSDAY, MARCH 20TH

BEGINNING AT 5:00 PM

Keep the spirit of play going on Thursday evening with an interactive scavenger hunt in downtown Grand Rapids.

Form a team, explore the city, solve playful clues, and connect with fellow attendees!

FRIDAY, MARCH 21ST

12:45 - 1:45 PM

We are excited to welcome back Matt Eickhoff of *Here's Your Host Trivia* for another year of playful competition with table vs. table trivia over lunch.

THURSDAY OPENING KEYNOTE

MAGGIE LANCASTER



Play is a Serious Business. Maggie Lancaster has been playing in some fashion with youngsters since she was just one herself. A life-long Michigander, she graduated from Alma College, where she played two sports, held two jobs, double majored, and double-minored. Following college, she started teaching and coaching at Jenison High School and Grand Rapids Community College - the time spent coaching in the city reinforced her love for Grand Rapids itself. After starting her own family, Maggie's involvement at the Grand Rapids Children's Museum began in earnest. Prior to accepting the CEO position in June of 2016, she spent years volunteering on committees, hosting and chairing events. While playing there was fun, one of her greatest highlights was serving on the Board at the Thornapple Valley Baseball League and coaching both sons - this is where they ALL learned to "play well" with others. She is married to Scott, mother to Aidan and Grant, servant to several cat rescues, and Godmother to Lily (an English Golden Retriever). She enjoys all sports, hunting, fishing, long walks and spending time with family and friends.

THURSDAY BREAKOUT SESSIONS

1:45 - 2:30 PM

ROOM 201

Building a "Cuddle Crew" Community through Creative Programming

Join the Cuddle Crew and learn how to help parents and kids unlock their imagination by creating stories with stuffies!

This is a Workshop and requires pre-registration

ROOM 202

Design a Teen Program with Joy

Reimagine teen library programs with play, teamwork and joy at its center with teen advisory boards, school outreach and lasting teen engagement.

ROOM 203

Parkour is for Storytime

Explore how parkour can build both early and health literacies. Hear how "Parkour for Littles" storytime began and how to modify it for your community.

ROOM AH

Playing with Dinosaurs: Building Science Literacy with Paleontological Programs

Join Michigan State University paleontologists for a 'crash course' in all things fossilized and leave with resources for your own dino-mite events.

THURSDAY BREAKOUT SESSIONS

11:00 - 11:45 AM

ROOM 201	Adopt a Pet & Playful STEAM Stations Explore an animal-themed STEAM adventure by adopting a new pet complete with interactive stations. Enjoy a hands-on play time that will leave you inspired with reimagined program ideas. <i>*This is a Workshop and requires pre-registration*</i>
ROOM 202	Staying On Your Toes: Improv Acting Skills in Library Programming Basic improv skills can turn stressful situations into fresh opportunities in youth services. In this session, participants will learn 3 basic Rules of Improv Acting.
ROOM 203	Can AI and Play Co-Exist in Youth Departments? A Community Conversation Can play and AI co-exist? Learn the latest AI trends, then converse with colleagues about childhood, AI, and your youth program.
ROOM AH	Big Playdate, Big Fun: Creative Dramatic Play for Birth-Five Looking for fun, play-based programming for ages 5 & under? Learn how to host a Big Playdate with tons of theme examples and activity ideas.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON KEYNOTE

KATIE MANN AND ANNIE KLARK

Spotlight on Belonging: Using Theatre and Play to Foster Inclusion

Taking a deeper dive into making curriculum accessible to all abilities and dramatic play that sparks the imagination.



OpenSpot Theatre's mission is to provide a fun, creative, and inclusive arts experience that is accessible to all people. Through our rehearsal and performance process, students will experience personal affirmation, empowerment, and build important skills.

In 2012 Annie Klark and Katie Mann co-founded OpenSpot Theatre, a mobile theatre for people with disabilities. Since then they have grown to a national company, servicing over 15,000 actors. With Annie's professional background in Vocal Music Performance/Directing and Katie's masters in Special Education they are the perfect pair to bring fun, engaging and educational curriculum to the curious. Together we can bring #TheatreForAll.



FRIDAY OPENING KEYNOTE

TONY WEAVER, JR

From Weirdo to Weird Enough: Improving Self Esteem for Nerdy Readers with Tony Weaver, Jr.

The library often becomes home to kids who feel different or “weird.” Explore how librarians can support the agency and identity of those readers with Tony Weaver, Jr., Tik Tok Superstar,

Forbes Education Social Activist, and author of *Weirdo*, a middle grade graphic novel described by Jason Reynolds as “a blinding light of a tale about a boy who fights to become himself.”

Tony Weaver Jr. is the author of *Weirdo*, a middle grade graphic novel named best book of the year by People Magazine, Kirkus, The School Library Journal, and Publishers Weekly. It also earned him nominations for Best Children's Publication at The Eisner and Harvey Awards. Whether he's making wholesome TikToks chronicling his love of nerd culture with his audience of over 1 million followers, or leading his education nonprofit “Weird Enough Productions,” Tony brings a sense of nerdy joy to everything he does. If you're looking for self love and laughter, he'd love to be your “Nerdy Older Brother.”



FRIDAY AFTERNOON KEYNOTE

AMY NIELANDER

The Mirror, the Mergirl and the Fish Who Loved Cheeseburgers: Playful Drawing for Creativity, Connection & Community with Amy Nielander



In this interactive session, Amy shares the evolution of her Create a Character Activity and Parent-Child Drawing Workshops. She shows how simple sketch prompts help families communicate, imagine, and build resilience together. Participants will engage in playful drawing exercises, including a large-scale Create a Character Community Activity that promotes team building.

Amy Nielander is a designer, children's book author-illustrator, and a book coach at The Detroit Writing Room. Since 2024, she has been leading interactive Parent-Child Drawing Workshops at libraries that encourage families to sketch together regularly. Through a combination of art, design, and playful collaboration, Amy's workshops inspire families to develop a fun creative practice at home, nurturing meaningful connections.

