

PRESS RELEASE

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THE NEW YORK LIBRARY ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES THE KEYNOTE SPEAKERS FOR THE 2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

ALBANY, NY – The New York Library Association (NYLA) is pleased to announce the Keynote Speakers for their 2018 Annual Conference and Trade Show. The Keynote, *Our Voices Together: How Conversations Create Change*, will be presented by Leah Esguerra and Jennifer Keys.

Leah Esguerra is a California Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT). She is the nation's first full-time library social worker. Esguerra was hired by the San Francisco Public Library, the [2018 Library Journal library of the year](#), in 2009 to do outreach to patrons in need of social services. She is also an employee of the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing. Prior to working at SFPL, Leah worked at a community mental health clinic in San Francisco for eight years providing treatment and intensive case management services to the homeless and severely mentally ill population. She also worked at a domestic violence shelter in San Francisco for four years as a Child Therapist/Children's Advocate. She has assisted over a thousand library patrons with their social service needs since 2009. The library social service team under Leah's supervision has become a national model for libraries seeking to provide services to its patrons who are experiencing homelessness, mental health issues, and other life challenges.

Jennifer Keys has been a Health and Safety Associate since May 2017 at the San Francisco Public Library. She has been instrumental in linking over a hundred library patrons with community resources. While working at a HASA at SFPL, she has successfully completed a course in Peer Counseling and is now a Certified Peer Specialist.

Their keynote presentation will focus on the partnership between social workers and libraries, specifically how this it has helped connect homeless patrons with housing and social services. The collaborative efforts between the San Francisco Public Library and community-based organizations were instrumental in achieving new breakthroughs with an underserved population of patrons.

Tim Burke, NYLA President & Executive Director of the Upper Hudson Library System: “The theme of this year’s conference, *Making A Difference...Together*, was chosen to remind us that when we work as a collective, with a

common purpose and shared goals, we're better, stronger, and smarter. Leah and Jennifer exemplify this in their story of partnership and collaboration."

For more information about the 2018 Keynote, visit nyla.org/conference.

About NYLA:

The New York Library Association (NYLA) is the voice of the library community in New York. NYLA is the oldest state library association in the country and represents school, college, special and public libraries, library staff, trustees, and students from around the state.

NYLA is the only statewide organization dedicated to advocating on behalf of all libraries and library staff in Albany and serves as the spokesperson on library matters to the media and public policymakers.

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