

**Camila Alire's Presidential Initiative:
Libraries: the Heart of ALL Communities
*Family Literacy Focus Model***

The family literacy focus is a natural extension of advocacy especially since we, as library workers, create “model communities” by developing literate communities. We know that a literate public is an informed public and that America’s libraries offer library users access to information in all formats. Our job, as librarians and library workers, is to help our users access this information. Our role is to motivate, encourage, guide, train and educate people in becoming informed citizens; and by helping them to be part of a literate community. Literacy can take many forms—basic literacy for families and adults, information literacy, digital literacy, economic literacy, cultural literacy. All of these literacies help libraries and library workers provide information that inspires, educates, entertains, and brings people together. Libraries provide opportunities for families to read, learn, and play together while exploring and engaging in multiple literacy experiences. Family literacy activities create opportunities to practice reading and writing skills while developing literacy behaviors. Families share books, play games, discover new worlds at their libraries and together build stronger communities.

We all know that many members of our ethnic communities have limited literacy skills. We also know that low literacy has a lifelong impact on children and adults. Because of the implications and impact, the five Ethnic Affiliates are positioned to shepherd the ***Family Literacy Focus*** in communities where the need is greatest. I am inviting AILA, APALA, BCALA, CALA, and REFORMA to plan and implement family literacy activities that will engage their respective communities.

In the spirit of El Día de los Niños/El Día de los Libros, each Ethnic Affiliate product will be designed for flexibility and inclusiveness, matching community needs for families to read, learn, and play together. El Día is a strong and effective model that has become a national symbol of family literacy for Latino and Spanish speaking communities. The products are widely recognized and easily tailored to individual libraries. Many different types of libraries – academic, school and public libraries participate in El Día reading celebrations across the country.

In my presidential year, the goal is to help additional family literacy models take shape in minority communities. I hope that you will use this opportunity to develop an innovative family literacy program and product that will work within and beyond the Native American, Asian American, Pacific American, African American, Chinese American and Latino communities. The online design will ensure that your efforts have a long-lasting literacy impact on libraries throughout the country. My hope is that other communities will have access to your good work and tailor the model to reflect their own needs.

We, in the library field, continue to aspire to have every person in our ethnic communities be readers, information seekers, and library patrons. We can reach this goal through our combined literacy efforts and actions. Please join me in this effort!

Camila Alire