

Library and Information Week 2024

Theme: Celebrating Library and Information Professionals: Authoritative and Reliable...A Fi Wi Legacy

A Special Advertising Feature

Let us celebrate each other and 'Fi Wi Legacy'

THIS WEEK, we are embarking on another chapter in our long history as library and information professionals offering dedicated and timely services and products to the Jamaican community. Let me express our collective thanks to the individuals, institutions and groups that have lent their support to our noble association. Colleagues, friends and well-wishers, I greet you well, as we commemorate Library and Information Professionals Week 2024, (October 27-November 1). It is with an overwhelming sense of pride and heartfelt joy that I extend warm greetings to you all. This year's theme, 'Celebrating Library and Information Professionals: Authoritative and Reliable ... A Fi Wi Legacy', beautifully captures the essence of who we are and the enduring impact of our profession.

This is the eighth staging of Library and Information Professionals Week since it was declared by Governor General Sir Patrick Linton Allen, ON, GCMG, CD, KSTJ, on October 20, 2016. This event has served as a beacon, shining a spotlight on this noble profession and those individuals who work so hard to provide quality service to the Jamaican society.

In a world where information is the cornerstone of progress and development, the Library and Information Association of Jamaica (LIAJA) as a professional body continues to play a pivotal role in shaping the intellectual and cultural landscape of our citizens. For the past 75 years, LIAJA as a dedicated body has been at the forefront of promoting the importance of libraries and information services in Jamaica.

Please be aware that the association is organising several activities to commemorate our Diamond Anniversary in 2025. As professionals, we continue to be the guardians of knowledge, the gatekeepers of truth, and the navigators of information, a responsibility that LIAJA carries with pride, purpose, and unwavering dedication.

As an association, we have steadfastly upheld the values of authority and reliability in the dissemination of knowledge, ensuring that our communities have access to trustworthy and valuable information resources.

As professionals, we are the vanguard of knowledge, the gatekeepers of truth, and the navigators of information, an obligation that we undertake with dignity and solid determination. Additionally, LIAJA has been at the forefront of advocating for the importance of libraries and information services in Jamaica.

Being authoritative and reliable means that we not only provide access to information, but we also uphold the highest standards of accuracy, integrity, and trust. As more people rely on social media for news and information, library professionals will need to provide targeted guidance

on navigating these platforms responsibly. In an environment saturated with deception, the need for authoritative, reliable sources is critical. Our librarians and information professionals will continue to source and deliver collections that provide accurate and verified information across a range of topics.

Our communities depend on us to deliver credible and well-sourced information, to guide them through the complexities of knowledge in an era increasingly plagued by misinformation and disinformation. In a world increasingly flooded with distortion and falsehood, the role of librarians and information professionals will be both challenging and transformative. We will continue to be custodians of truth, educators of the public, and advocates for access to reliable information, ensuring that knowledge remains a force for empowerment and social advancement.

We are indeed trusted information professionals with the responsibility for sourcing, selecting, organising, caring, and providing access to information. Librarians and information professionals are uniquely positioned to be frontline defenders of truth and precision. However, this evolving landscape also presents new challenges and opportunities for our professionals to expand our roles in society. As specialists, we do more than manage libraries, information units and resource centres; we ensure that knowledge remains a tool for empowerment, equity, and progress. Our commitment to ensuring fair and equal access to information for all, regardless of background or circumstance, forms the foundation of our legacy – one that continues to inspire, educate, and empower generations.

The sub-theme: 'A Fi Wi Legacy' reminds us that our contribution is both deeply personal and profoundly collective. It is our legacy – a legacy built by those before us and sustained by each of us today. As we reflect on the impact of our work and worth, let us celebrate the rich tradition of service, and community engagement that defines our profession.

Our legacy is seen in the countless lives we have touched: the students who have been guided toward academic success, the researchers whose work has been enriched by our expertise, and the communities that have found a place of learning, connection, and safety within our libraries, information units and resource centres. Through our work, we shape the future by safeguarding the past and providing access to the knowledge that fuels tomorrow's innovations.

My colleagues, as we move forward into an increasingly digital world, we must recognise that our role is ever-changing. The rise of artificial



"Celebrating Library and Information Professionals: Authoritative and Reliable ...A Fi Wi Legacy."

intelligence, and digital literacy presents both challenges and opportunities. As we adapt to new technologies and emerging threats, we will be at the forefront of the fight against fake news, securing our place as trusted, authoritative voices in an uncertain world. Therefore, as technology evolves, we must embrace our roles as navigators of the digital world. Based on the increase in AI-generated content and deepfakes, we will need to stay ahead by using data analytics, AI tools, and digital forensics to detect false information and guide our patrons to trustworthy digital resources. Colleagues, we are to remain at the forefront of these changes, adapting to new technologies while ensuring that the values of integrity, inclusivity, and reliability remain at the heart of everything we do.

The role of our profession in promoting and supporting academic integrity is crucial. Academic integrity defends the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage in educational and research settings, and our librarians and information professionals play a central role in fostering these principles. In an age where there is easy access to information and increased opportunities for academic dishonesty, we are to stand as both educators and stewards of academic honesty, and, in doing so, help to build a culture that values and rewards integrity, responsibility, and respect in the academic community.

Colleagues, let us embrace these new technological opportunities with the same spirit of fairness, innovation, resilience, and excellence that has defined our profession for decades. By continuing to champion ethical practices, promoting critical thinking, and ensuring that information remains a force for good, we will keep our profession relevant and vital in a rapidly changing world.

During this special week, let us take the time to celebrate not only the profession but each other. To every librarian, records manager, archivist, paraprofessional, data manager, and information professional, thank you for your tireless dedication, your passion for knowledge, and your commitment to upholding the highest standards of service. You are the foundation of 'Fi Wi Legacy', and it is your unwavering commitment

that ensures our profession continues to thrive.

As we celebrate Library and Information Professionals Week 2024, let us remember that we are not just maintaining a legacy, we are building one that will continue to inspire generations to come. Together, we stand as authoritative and reliable, shaping the future, one piece of knowledge at a time. Heartfelt thank you to our advertisers, sponsors, and writers for this supplement. Your support is like sustenance to us, and it has truly made a difference.

Colleagues, let us continue to celebrate, uplift, and champion the vital role we play in building a more informed, empowered, and equitable Jamaican society. Thank you, and may God continue to bless the Library and Information Association of Jamaica in its endeavours.

To learn more about us, please visit our website: <https://liaja.org.jm/> Happy Library and Information Professional Week 2024!

JOSEPH A. KERR, JP
2024 President
Library and Information Association of Jamaica (LIAJA)



We look to the future with renewed vision

IT IS with great pride that we celebrate Library and Information Week under the theme, 'Celebrating Library and Information Professionals: Authoritative and Reliable ... a Fi Wi Legacy'. This year's theme underscores the pivotal roles information professionals have long played in curating and providing access to information, as well as facilitating learning, innovation and community engagement.

In times of uncertainty and rapid change, such as witnessed during natural disasters, public libraries remain resilient. The expertise and dedication of information professionals have been indispensable in helping citizens to confidently navigate the physical and digital landscapes while guarding against misinformation. Our school librarians have been recognised as vanguards of authentic learning – the vital bridge between school and home as we assist children and adults in their developmental learning and application of acquired knowledge to real life.

The Jamaica Library Service has placed special focus on programming as an important vehicle for the advancement of early literacy, encouraging the reading habit among citizens and fostering community support for our seniors. The programmes offered contribute meaningfully to lifelong learning, develop positive attitudes towards our culture and fuel the empowerment of individuals for personal development. We are also strong advocates for bridging the digital divide.

Our information professionals play a pivotal role by connecting library users to resources, training and support to help them acquire the skills necessary to navigate the digital world. It is our unwavering commitment to empower our communities by providing opportunities for all to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background or circumstances ensuring that no one is left behind.

As we celebrate the legacy we look to the future with renewed vision as we unlock new opportunities to serve. We encourage all information professionals to continue to adapt and innovate, as we continue to build on our immense legacy and inspire the next generation of learners. The Jamaica Library Service proudly salutes all library and information professionals – your dedication makes a difference.

Happy Library and Information Professionals Week.

MAUREEN THOMPSON
Director General



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Partnership towards sustainable development goals

THE GOVERNMENT Libraries Information Network of Jamaica (GLINJA) extends heartfelt congratulations to the Library and Information Association of Jamaica (LIAJA) for its enduring leadership and commitment to professional development and the National Information System. GLINJA is proud to continue its collaborative efforts with LIAJA to uphold the shared responsibility of providing citizens with the critical information they need to make informed decisions across all areas of life. This partnership not only strengthens library services but also aligns with national priorities, contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the promotion of peace, ethics, transparency, and good governance.

In recent years, GLINJA has dedicated itself to highlighting the essential role of libraries in sustainable development. Through our joint initiatives with LIAJA, we are ensuring that citizens and decision-makers alike have access to trustworthy information that impacts various facets of life – from economic and social well-being to environmental stewardship.

Acknowledging a significant shift in information access, libraries are meeting the increasing demand for digital engagement through emails and other online tools, while traditional in-person visits have become less frequent. Researchers, technical writers, and policymakers are relying more on digital resources, which calls for library professionals to be technologically skilled to support seamless information access.

To address these needs, GLINJA is dedicated to making real-time information readily available through ‘Ask the Librarian’, a comprehensive service offered via the websites of government ministries, departments, and agencies. This service provides a direct link to a consortium of librarians who ensure



that vital information is accessible. GLINJA and LIAJA are also dedicated to promoting public access to information while safeguarding intellectual property rights, thereby supporting transparency and informed decision-making.

Our collective mission includes equipping researchers and citizens with accurate, up-to-date data from key national resources, including the Economic and Social Survey Jamaica and the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions. Additionally, data from the Statistical Institute of Jamaica are now fully available online, providing seamless digital access to information essential for research, policymaking, and for public use.

Through the ongoing partnership between GLINJA and LIAJA, citizens are empowered to seek information that supports informed, ethical, and transparent decisions. Together, we are committed to building a knowledge-rich environment that not only fulfils our shared professional goals but also strengthens Jamaica’s commitment to the SDGs, peace, good governance, and intellectual integrity.

ODEAN COLE-PHOENIX
Coordinator
Government Libraries Information Network of Jamaica

Shh, don’t tell anyone, but I love my job: A love letter to librarianship

WHY DID I become a librarian? Simply because of librarians! But wait, let me tell you how it all began. Growing up, I never even realised librarianship was a profession, but love for it was quietly growing in me.

At Franklin Town Primary, I had a school librarian, Mrs Rosemarie Grossett, who changed my world. Every time my class visited the library, she made sure we had a book in our hand to take home. There was one book I chose in particular, no cover, no title page, and even two chapters missing! To this day, I still don’t know what it was called. But every time I read it, it whisked me away to another world. It was about a little girl in Canada, living a carefree life with her friends. As a child growing up surrounded by the constant sound of gunshots at night, too scared to even move, this book was my escape. I wanted to be that little girl so badly, just laughing and playing, free of fear. I read that book so many times, that I even convinced myself and others that I had actually been to Canada! That’s the magic of books – they transport us; they give us hope; and, for girls like me, they help us dream bigger, beyond our reality.

By the time I reached high school at the Convent of Mercy Academy ‘Alpha’, I was searching for my calling. I started writing poetry in second form after my older brother was killed by gun violence. Putting my feelings into words was the only way I knew to deal with the pain. For a while, I thought I’d be a novelist, but by third form, while working on my school-based assessments, I found myself diving into encyclopaedias in the school library. And boy, did they open my eyes! Suddenly, I was sure I wanted to be a journalist, digging up facts and delivering important information. Isn’t it funny how life twists and turns?

As a teen, I threw myself into youth advocacy, using everything I learned in school to uplift others. I became the advocacy programme and training officer for violence prevention at the Jamaica Youth Advocacy Network (JYAN), president of Positive Youths in Action, and co-founder and tutor of GhettoWise Education. I wanted to push young people toward education, not violence.

At 18 years old, I joined the Jamaica Library Service, and two years later, I was head-over-heels in love with librarianship, especially in the school library section. It was the perfect career for me, a blend of everything I wanted: books, education, advocacy, and service. Today, I’m proud to serve as the second vice-president and honorary treasurer for the Library and Information Association of Jamaica (LIAJA), which is celebrating 75 years of dedicated service.

My passion now? Digital literacy, data protection,



and access to information. It all started when WhatsApp became popular in 2014, and my mother didn’t know how to use her smartphone. I didn’t want her to feel embarrassed while using it or share her personal information online, so I took it upon myself to teach her. I only wish she were alive today to see me living out my dream. She’d be so proud, shouting, “Watch my librarian daughter!”

Today, I also serve as an academic librarian at HEART/NSTA Trust, ensuring students are equipped with the digital skills they need and the knowledge to protect their personal data. It’s more than just a job; it’s my mission.

I wouldn’t be where I am today without the librarians who came before me. To my mentors, Kishma Simpson, Winsome Hudson, and the late Mary Bewaji, thank you for believing in me and teaching me invaluable lessons. To my dear librarian FRIENDS, Antoinette Dunston, Chantal Cousins, Simona Spencer, and Kaye-Ann Robinson, thank you for your unwavering support, for being there when I needed a shoulder to cry on, and for giving me the strength to keep going.

I never imagined I’d end up here, but every day, I’m so proud to serve the people of Jamaica by providing reliable, authoritative information.

I love being a librarian, and that’s a secret I’m thrilled to share with the world!

KADIESHA A. GRANT
Second Vice-President and Honorary Treasurer
Library and Information Association of Jamaica (LIAJA)





Celebrating
Library and Information
Professionals

Librarians empower our communities and promote learning by providing access to authoritative information

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