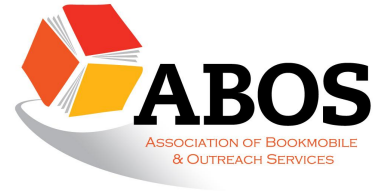


Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services

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Press Release – For Immediate Release

Hugo Ricalday Cuevas, Professional Assistant at the Oceanside Public Library in Oceanside, CA, is the recipient of the 2022 Pattie Johnston Outreach Award. The Pattie Johnston Outreach Award, sponsored by the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services and Mission Mobile Specialty Vehicles, is presented annually to a bookmobile or outreach support staff member who has provided exemplary service to their community through bookmobile and outreach services.

It would be an impossible task to find someone who cares about the Oceanside community as much as Hugo Ricalday Cuevas does. Hugo has been driving the Oceanside Public Library's Adelante Bookmobile, providing outreach and delivering library services, for the past 7 years. The Adelante Bookmobile was originally purchased through grant funding to provide Spanish and English language material and health information to underserved neighborhoods in Oceanside. Under Hugo's outstanding leadership, the Adelante Bookmobile has evolved into not only a popular service, but an indispensable community resource.

Hugo is genuine and sincere in his desire to make a difference in the community, and has taken steps to do so. He started a teen book club at one of the bookmobile stops, and serves as an informal mentor to many of the youth. He created a bilingual storytime, and has developed and implemented a series of programs and bilingual story strolls in the park for informal caregivers. Some of the neighborhoods that the bookmobile serves experience high rates of crime and gang activity. Community members have expressed to Hugo that having the bookmobile there, and the programs he provides, makes them feel safer.

Before the pandemic, the Adelante Bookmobile not only had regular weekly stops, but also a robust schedule of appearances at schools and special community events, which Hugo attended. In addition to driving the bus, Hugo created eye-catching displays, and engaging and interactive programs for families, such as the monthly scavenger hunt on the bus.

As with many other libraries, the Oceanside Public Library staff had to be flexible and forward-thinking when it came to serving the public in 2020/2021 during the pandemic. Hugo

excelled during that difficult time. When the pandemic struck, the Library was forced to temporarily suspend bookmobile service. When asked if he would be willing to help elementary school children at the neighborhood resource centers navigate online school, Hugo agreed without hesitation. Hugo worked with a diverse group of students of varying ages and school readiness skills, all in one room. He became the liaison between the students and teachers, and was able to provide the unique and individualized support that each student required. There were several challenges, like slow internet connections, finicky devices and even kindergarteners that had never been to “in-person” school, but Hugo met each challenge with patience, adaptability and a can-do attitude.

When the bookmobile returned to the road, Hugo developed a plan to safely provide service by creating an outdoor browsing collection at the stops. He meticulously thought through the details necessary to continue to provide exemplary service while creating a safe and welcoming environment. Since the return of the bookmobile, circulation numbers have increased significantly, thanks to Hugo’s preparation, imaginative displays, and personal outreach to the families in the community.

Recently, the Adelante Bookmobile suffered a series of mechanical issues, and was not able to be on the road for a period of about four months. With incredible flexibility and adaptability, Hugo and his team quickly turned the Library’s courier van into a make-shift outreach vehicle. Every day, they would load the van with books, crafts, activities, tables, chairs and canopies and head out to the parks so that the community would not be without library services. Then every day, they would have to unload the van so that it could be used the following morning by the library courier. This was a herculean task that they cheerfully did everyday without complaint, knowing how very much they were needed in those neighborhoods.

Hugo never says no to a challenge, and approaches every day as a new opportunity to serve a community he cares so deeply about.

The Pattie Johnston Outreach Award will be presented at the Awards Ceremony during the 2022 Conference of the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services in Scottsdale, Arizona.