

Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services

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Press Release – For Immediate Release

Jeri Gilham, Head of Outreach Services at Montrose Regional (CO) Library District, is the recipient of the 2020 ABOS Outstanding Bookmobile Librarian Award. The Outstanding Bookmobile Librarian Award, sponsored by the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services and the United States Census Bureau, is presented annually to a bookmobile librarian, assistant, or driver in recognition of their continuous dedication and commitment to the bookmobile profession.

Jeri Gilham is the epitome of outreach services. Spanning a career of over 40 years, she has striven to bring literacy to the young and old, meeting patrons and their needs where they are. From driving a bookmobile in Detroit more than 20 years ago to the past 13 years at the Montrose Regional Library, Jeri has never stopped putting the community first. At the main branch library she helped design and implement the Outreach Services Department which now has both a 32 foot bookmobile for children's services and a 24 foot Sprinter van donated for the use in senior/late literacy and assisting community organizations receive library services.

Jeri's mantra is collaboration--whether that is inside the library with staff and departments or out in the surrounding community, she will bring together any and every valued opportunity of service for those she is trying to help. The library has ties with a myriad number of organizations such as the Migrant Headstart, the Early Childhood Centers, the Montrose Botanic Gardens, the Boys and Girls Club, the Cities of Montrose and Olathe, Haven House (temporary housing), and the Mental Health Center due to Jeri's efforts to connect library services to those most in need via the outreach vehicles. Her biggest library project each year is the summer reading program. Every summer Jeri will plan, promote, and carry out the Summer Library Adventure, to bring books to hundreds of children in under served and impoverished neighborhoods, primarily Hispanic communities.

This summer, due to COVID-19, Jeri received a grant from the Food Bank of the Rockies which enabled the Outreach Department to reach even more children. Through the use of the book van, Jeri and her team delivered over 2,200 books with STEM and literacy kits to children along with more than 10,000 food packets throughout June and July. The day after summer programming finished, she said "What's next? Who can we help now?". The next outreach adventure will be through another grant she helped write to provide digital and information access to those in need in three locations throughout our community. This grant will involve taking both vehicles to designated community collaborative stops to provide internet and computer access, staff

expertise, collection materials, and educational assistance to parents and teachers in the district. Jeri never stops, she perseveres and provides, and she does it with a smile and unflagging energy.

The Outstanding Bookmobile Librarian Award will be presented at the Awards Ceremony to be held on Wednesday, October 14, during the 2020 Virtual Conference of the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services. The ceremony starts at 9:30 a.m. CST.