

Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services

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Press Release – For Immediate Release

Thomas Dean, Library Graduate School Student at the Emporia State University’s School of Library and Information Management (SLIM), is the recipient of the 2021 ABOS Bernard Vavrek Scholarship. The Bernard Vavrek Scholarship, sponsored by the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services and Farber Specialty Vehicles, is presented annually to a student who is currently enrolled and has completed at least one semester in a Library and/or Information Science graduate degree program, and who is interested in the field of bookmobile and outreach services.

Thomas Dean is currently enrolled in two different graduate programs, Master of Library of Science (MLS) at Emporia State University and Master of Social Work (MSW) at University of Missouri-Kansas City, both with a major focus on the services of others. In both programs, Thomas has developed his course work around outreach services as much as possible; Thomas believes that the outreach services of both the library and the social work professions are pivotal to the mission in service of others.

Currently, Thomas is devoted to the outreach services of those less fortunate as the supervisor of a child abuse and neglect investigation unit. In this role, Thomas has developed training related to the service of others and particularly to those who are generally over-represented in the child welfare system. This has often included members of LGBTQIA+ community.

During his coursework, Thomas focuses on the LGBTQIA+ community in terms of service and outreach. This has included the creations of proposed of LGBTQIA+ book collections of children and YA award winners, Adult LGBTQIA+ Book Club Programming, the use of health informatics in working during times of crisis for HIV/AIDS patients, research centered on the lack of representation of LGBTQIA+ award winners in mainstream book awards, and the need to representation in the library of LGBTQIA+ topics/books/programming as the creation of safe space opportunities.

In addition to being passionate about outreach to the LGBTQIA+ community, Thomas also has an interest in library outreach to patrons experiencing homelessness, patrons living with

addiction, patrons living with educational/developmental/literacy complications, as well as elderly adults and patrons who are physically unable to make their way to the library.

Dr. Jody K. Howard, National Regional Professor for the School of Library and Information Management (SLIM) at Emporia State University, shares that as a student of her class on GLBTIQ Resources and Services for Librarians, “Thomas exhibited a desire to work with members of the learning community through outreach services. The website he designed for this class included numerous resources that are appropriate for those having HIV/AIDS and how current literature can provide assistance with this specific condition. Thomas desires to work with those who are faced with possible inequities that can be mitigated through programs provided by bookmobiles and other outreach services.”

Thomas currently maintains a 4.0 GPA at the Emporia State University’s School of Library and Information Management (SLIM).

The Bernard Vavrek Scholarship will be presented at the Awards Ceremony to be held on Tuesday, October 12, 2021, during the 2021 Virtual Conference of the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services. The ceremony starts at 10:15 a.m. CST.