

For Immediate Release
November 18, 2019

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RAILS Hires New Associate Executive Director, Monica Harris

BURR RIDGE – Monica Harris, currently the Executive Director of Schaumburg Township District Library, accepted the position of Associate Executive Director at the Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) and will begin work in January 2020. She replaces Jane Plass who retired November 15.

In her new role, Harris will continue Plass' work of implementing innovative projects and solutions for the nearly 1,300 member libraries of all types in Illinois. Her job will also include the important work of ensuring that RAILS services and operations are member-focused, efficient, and that they continue to lead libraries into the future.

RAILS Executive Director Deirdre Brennan said, "Monica is known for her ability to see the big picture, while bringing her plans to life. We are looking forward to working with her innovative spirit."

Harris became Executive Director of Schaumburg Township District Library in January 2017, formerly serving as Schaumburg's Deputy Director. In both her roles at Schaumburg, Harris worked with her team to bring new energy and ideas to the library through ventures like rebranding, a building remodel, and forming the new position of Creative Services Librarian, with the objective of concentrating on exhibits and large-scale programming.

After receiving her library degree from Wayne State University in Detroit in 2004, Harris worked at several small libraries in Michigan. She then relocated to Illinois to work at Oak Park Public Library for several years, before her move to Schaumburg. She also served as adjunct professor for San Jose State University's iSchool.

"I'm thrilled for the opportunity to work with a member driven organization that does so much to serve libraries of all types in Illinois. My enthusiasm and passion for libraries, responsive services, and innovative solutions is a good fit for the terrifically forward-thinking RAILS team."

RAILS provides a wide variety of innovative services to approximately 1,300 private, public, school, and university libraries in northern and west-central Illinois. Services include continuing education for library staff and trustees, shared catalog support, and delivery of millions of library materials between libraries each year. RAILS also offers a wide variety of e-resources, including platforms available to anyone in the state of Illinois without cost, a program that allows library patrons to receive various discounts when visiting Illinois cultural attractions, and much more.

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