

The National Medal for Museum and Library services is the nation's highest honor for libraries and museums that are serving their communities in exciting ways. Alachua County Library District director Shaney T. Livingston and community member Lenor Krome traveled to Washington to receive the national medal and spoke to IMLS about how the library impacts the community.

Shaney T Livingston: One thing that I am very proud of is our tag line is thinking outside the book. And by doing that it has allowed us to engage with many agencies in the community and one of the things that has really become somewhat of a national model for our library system is what we call the library partnership a neighborhood resource center. And we have 30 different agencies, social service type agencies that come through that organization so a person can go to that particular location. They can receive library services as well but in addition they can go to the partnership side and they can receive many different type social service agencies. We also engage with the University of Florida and we have what's called the Mobile outreach clinic. It's a rehab bus and its goes to 3 of our locations and from that unit patrons can actually go in and get medical assistance, also when they are there, the parents can send their kids in to the library. So that if they are needing to do some things the children go in to the library they are reading books, playing games or whatever. And the parents can be engaged with the health outreach service in doing that. We are very heavily into trying to recruit out teams in the community. We are in to gaming the Wii, things like that. We have pajama parties for the teens on Friday. So we are looking at a lot of different things that really makes us not necessary on the bleeding edge but on the cutting edge to really engage our community.

Lenor Krome: You have to realize Archer is a tiny town, its rural, does not have very much money. The people who live in the town don't have a very big income and so I noticed that a lot of people use the library especially for internet access being able to get to a computer. They started out with six computers and then it has expanded, I don't know to how many, 20 computers or so that are available for the patrons. When I first moved to Archer I was pregnant, and Archer had a book mobile that I would be a patron of and then they built a new facility and it was wonderful. I would go with my kids and they would be teething on the board books or I would be finding books to read to them. Starting in 3rd grade my children had to start writing reports for their 3rd grade teacher and it was with a library that I could go and say "I need a book on Amphibians". They are both in college now on the west coast - oh they'll go in and use the computer, because I don't have a computer at home or very often they will go "Hey I need to read some Hemmingway and they will go in and you know I better assigned him and they will get the books they had been assigned. So it's always been a great resource for us.

Shaney T Livingston: And it's little simple things, I mean even with our local Sheriff department you know they do their patrolling at night and we were asked by the Sheriff there "Would it be okay if the deputies park in our parking lot at night to be able to have access to the computer". Well great, why not? You know it provides security for us as well when we are closed. So it's just those little things any opportunity that you know you find as a partnership has to go for it. You know it's just a win, win for everybody involved.