MEDIA ADVISORY
SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARY WEEK (SALW) 17-23 MARCH 2014
Celebrating Libraries in 20 years of Democracy: CHECK IN @ YOUR LIBRARY

The Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) is celebrating South African Library Week from 15-22 March 2014 with the theme: "Celebrating Libraries in 20 years of Democracy: check in @ your library”

South African Library Week will be launched by the Deputy Minister of Arts & Culture, Dr Joseph Phaahla at the National Library of South Africa, Cape Town, on Saturday, 15 March 2014.

Librarians across the country will be hosting special programmes during this week to highlight the services and resources available in their facilities. Members of the public are encouraged to visit their libraries during this period and participate in these activities. A selection of these programmes from around the country will be available on the LIASA website, http://www.liasa.org.za.

In 2014 South Africa celebrates 20 years of democracy and the theme Celebrating Libraries in 20 years of Democracy: check in @ your library serves as an opportunity to focus attention on:

- Celebrating the development and role of libraries in the 20 years of South African democracy
- Highlighting how libraries are making the right to freedom of access to information, as enshrined in the Bill of Rights, a reality
- Enhancing nation building and community development by opening the doors of learning to all
- Showcasing libraries as desired spaces for:
  - connecting people to each other, learning resources, communities, government, the world and the environment
  - advancing literacy through the intellectual and aesthetic development of all ages
  - providing access to global knowledge and information in different formats to advance research and create new knowledge
  - fostering a spirit of enquiry and desire for lifelong learning
  - challenging one’s own beliefs and inculcating a respect for diverse beliefs, opinions and views all
  - contributing towards the development of an informed nation, and South Africa becoming an information society

Since 1994 great strides have been made to build new public and school libraries, merge academic libraries and upgrade historically disparate library facilities throughout the country. The burgeoning of the library and information services (LIS) sector in South Africa has resulted in a wide network of libraries that currently aims to serve all South Africans. The current status quo of libraries include:

- The National Library of South Africa (Pretoria and Cape Town)
- The South African Library for the Blind
This tangible national web of libraries gives predominantly free access to information and knowledge from all types of libraries around the country and has created the opportunity for a dynamic networked and connected society.

Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare and YouTube are widely used by libraries globally for marketing, communication and outreach. South African libraries are no different! The theme provides us with an opportunity to reach out to those who are unaware of how libraries have embraced technology to enhance access and learning. So, to the “Born Frees,” born in 1994 and voting for the first time in the 2014 national elections, and all those who belong to Generation C (connected digital natives & techno-savvy), it is definitely cool to check in @ your library!

Furthermore, the “Librarians' Choice: Top 20 South African Books, 1994-2014” will be launched during this Week. In celebrating this theme, library workers across South Africa have been requested to identify the Top 20 South African books published during these 20 years that:

- were written by a South African author in one of our official languages
- were published for the first time between 1994 and 2014
- reflect South African life by South Africans
- focus on issues of democracy or contribute to the consolidation of our democracy
- examine who we are and where we are heading as a nation.

The nominations are open to all genres, all types of literature from fiction to non-fiction, adult and even children's books. The Librarian’s Choice should be available to all when they “check in” at their libraries!

ABOUT LIASA

LIASA is the national professional association that represents libraries and information institutions; all library and information workers; and millions of users & potential users of libraries in South Africa. LIASA aims to unite, develop and empower all people in the library and information field. It represents the interests of and promotes the development and image of library and information services in South Africa. More information can be found at: http://www.liasa.org.za.

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