

ALA American Library Association

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American Library Association

Winners of the 2016 Will Eisner Graphic Novel Grants for Libraries Announced

The American Library Association (ALA) and the Will and Ann Eisner Family Foundation will honor the two winners of the 2016 Will Eisner Graphic Novel Grants for Libraries Saturday onsite at the ALA 2016 Annual Conference in Orlando, FL. The grants, funded by the Will and Ann Eisner Family Foundation, are administered by ALA's Games and Gaming Round Table and the Graphic Novels & Comics in Libraries Member Initiative Group.

The Will Eisner Graphic Novel Grants for Libraries consists of two annual grants. The Will Eisner Graphic Novel Growth Grant provides support to a library that would like to expand its **existing** graphic novel services and programs and the Will Eisner Graphic Novel Innovation Grant provides support to a library for the initiation of a graphic novel service, program or initiative.

The 2016 Will Eisner Graphic Novel Growth Grant is awarded to the Atlantic City Free Public Library, Atlantic City, NJ. For their project "A Day of Diversity in Graphic Novels" they plan to collaborate with the East Coast Black Age of Comics Convention – a Philadelphia non-profit – to present workshops for young people designed to foster creativity and promote literacy as well as a discussion program for adults and older teens on the history of black comic characters and creators.

The 2016 Will Eisner Graphic Novel Innovation Grant is presented to the Birchwood School Library, Columbia, SC. Their project "Our Story Told Through Graphic Illustrations: The View from Behind the Fence" is a collaborative effort between two professors from the University of South Carolina's School of Library and Information Science and the Birchwood School in the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice. The aim is to provide incarcerated youth with a unique opportunity to develop visual literacy skills and an awareness of careers in the visual arts.

Each of the grants awards the winning libraries with a \$2,000 voucher to purchase graphic novels from the distributor-partner – Diamond Book Distributors, \$1,000 to host a graphic novel-themed event, and a \$1,000 travel stipend to attend the 2016 ALA Annual Conference in Orlando. Additionally the winners will receive the Will Eisner Library (a graphic novel collection of Will Eisner's work and biographies about the acclaimed writer and artist) and copies of the graphic novels nominated for this year's Will Eisner Awards at San Diego Comic-Con.

Anna Coates, a member of the 2016 Will Eisner Graphic Novel Growth Grant jury said, "I am so happy to see the 2016 Will Eisner Growth Grant awarded to a program that is creative and innovative not only in the library world but also in the greater graphic novel community. Atlantic City Free Public Library's program and partnership with the East Coast Black Age of Comics Convention perfectly embodies the spirit of Will Eisner by fostering tomorrow's graphic novelists."

Nancy and Carl Gropper of the Foundation add, "Will Eisner was the first creator of his time who deeply believed in the literary and artistic potential of the comics medium, and in its capacity to handle subject matter of a serious nature. The subsequent recognition and acceptance of this medium by the library community was of great importance to him. Through their hard work, thoughtful development and creativity, graphic novel librarians across the nation are building graphic novel collections representative of some of the best work in the field for readers of all ages and backgrounds. We are most grateful for their efforts and offer these grants with our heartfelt appreciation. Our congratulations to this year's grant winners for their most inspiring and innovative work." About The Will and Ann Eisner Family Foundation

The Will and Ann Eisner Family Foundation fosters innovation and creativity in graphic literature, sequential art and comics. It encourages others to continue and build upon the legacy of Will Eisner, who broke new ground in the development of visual narrative and the language of comics and was the creator of The Spirit, John Law, Lady Luck, Mr. Mystic, Uncle Sam, Blackhawk, Sheena and countless others. For more information about Will Eisner visit www.willeisner.com.

About ALA

Established in 1876, the American Library Association (ALA) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization created to provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all. More information on the [grant and the application process](#) can be found at <http://www.ala.org/gamert/will-eisner-graphic-novel-grants-libraries>.