

I Love My Librarian

More than 3,200 individual library users nationwide nominated a librarian for the inaugural Carnegie Corporation of New York/*New York Times* "I Love My Librarian" Award, to show their appreciation for the services library professionals offer their communities, schools, and campuses. Ten of those nominees rose to the top and received the prestigious honor and a \$5,000 cash award at a ceremony and reception at the Times Center, hosted by the *New York Times* December 9 in New York City.

"Librarians are even more important to their communities in this digital age," said Carnegie President Vartan Gregorian. "They are the people many turn to for help in navigating the complex and information-rich world of the Web where the quality of the research and reports is not always clear. These 10 librarians deserve applause because their professionalism has won the attention and respect of their neighbors."

"The *New York Times* is proud to collaborate with the American Library Association and Carnegie Corporation of New York in recognizing the role of librarians in

society," said Janet L. Robinson, president and chief executive officer of the *New York Times* Company. "Literacy and public access to knowledge are critical to our democracy and the work of these librarians quite simply, enriches us all."

"This award honors the significant relationship between library users and librarians, and this special feature in *American Libraries* offers a glimpse into their achievements and responses," said Jim Rettig, president of ALA, which began administering the awards program this year. Read more at www.ilovelibraries.org.

Libraries Director
Pasco County Library System
Hudson, Florida



Linda
Allen

Hiring good people and letting them shine is my favorite part of the job," says Linda Allen. "It is such a joy to watch my staff discover the depth and breadth of their talents and to see them grow into a truly phenomenal team." A *Pasco Tribune* editorial recently observed, "The best thing going on in Pasco County is its library system, which according to some users would be the envy of some states. That's mighty high praise, and it's richly deserved, thanks to Director Linda Allen, her staff, and county officials who have made library service a priority." Allen sums it up: "We are not a big library system, but I think we have made a big difference to the quality of life for the citizens of Pasco County and have added to the value of public libraries in Florida as a whole."

Reference Librarian
Antioch University New England
Keene, New Hampshire



Jean
Amaral

Libraries are, among other things, rockin' places for life-long learning. And I love that!" says Jean Amaral. "I want my students to be jazzed about research—it's exciting, fun, hard work. I want them to know that they can change the world and that their library can help them do it." To make that happen, Amaral relies on "my complete belief in the students and faculty of Antioch University New England and the work they are engaged in." Asked what gives her the most satisfaction as a reference librarian, Amaral says it's watching her students become "smart, savvy information consumers and producers. Information is power, and librarians are information wranglers!" Of her work she says, "I couldn't imagine doing anything else."

I love being the librarian at the Juvenile Hall,” says Amy J. Cheney. “I love that this award acknowledges someone who serves teens and the multicultural population that I serve.” The lock-down institution in which she works leaves little opportunity for youth to have free choice, says Cheney, but at the library “youth have the freedom to choose and pursue what they’re interested in and to explore and experience other worlds and lives.” To make that happen, she has invited many of their favorite authors, who can “elevate and illuminate the possibilities for their lives,” to speak with her patrons. The presenters learn from the youth as well, Cheney notes. “In a place traditionally designed to isolate people, community is in fact strengthened and expanded by this vibrant learning process and the dialogues it creates between writer, youth, and staff.”

Amy J. Cheney

Librarian
Alameda County Library,
Juvenile Hall
San Leandro, California



If the media center, or as we call it, the learning center, is truly the heart of the school, then the students, teachers, administration, and parents are the life blood,” says Jennifer Lankford Dempsey. As a school library media specialist, her work “is all about the children and creating a joy in learning.” What’s important to Dempsey is that the learning center has “a welcoming and warm atmosphere so that children who enter will know that this is their space, their place to experiment, research, collaborate, create, and, of course, find a wonderful book to read.” To foster that reading, Dempsey has initiated funding initiatives of her own, including “2000 for 2000,” where she set a turn-of-the-century goal of adding 2000 new books to the collection. “The climate at our school encourages everyone to become better and better all the time,” she says. “I am so blessed.”

Jennifer Lankford Dempsey

Library Media Specialist and
Technology Coordinator
Wrights Mill Road Elementary School
Auburn, Alabama



Community Services Librarian
Kansas City (Kans.) Public Library;
Weekend Supervisor
Plaza Branch Library,
Kansas City Public Library
Kansas City, Missouri

Having begun a new life in America in 1990 as a political refugee from apartheid rule in South Africa, Carol W. Levers says she owes her library career to ALA. “If not for the Spectrum scholarship that I received, I would not be standing here tonight,” she said at the award ceremony. “Winning the I Love My Librarian Award validates the passion of what I do every day,” she observes, adding that “the most satisfaction I get from my work comes when I put a smile on a patron’s face.” Levers’ specialty is outreach, and her multilingual skills heighten her effectiveness as a community services librarian at the Kansas City Public Library. Her patrons and colleagues describe her as a role model who creates a spirit of teamwork among her coworkers and as an individual possessed of tremendous sincerity and integrity.

Carol W. Levers



Hard work and perseverance are the keys to developing a viable library media program in Battle Creek, Michigan, says Margaret “Gigi” Lincoln, noting that she has devoted a 36-year career to making it happen. She plays by the book in as much as “I have tried to create a warm, stimulating, and safe library environment as called for in the new *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner*,” published by ALA’s American Association of School Librarians. But she has also used her interest and background in Holocaust studies to bring expanded learning opportunities to the entire community. Lincoln believes a librarian must be “a sympathetic and confidential listener when needed. Recommending the next best novel for a student’s book report is as vital to me as reaching out to a troubled teen,” she says.

Margaret “Gigi” Lincoln

Library Media Specialist
Lakeview High School Library
Battle Creek, Michigan



Associate University Librarian and
Head of the Education Library
University of Florida
Gainesville



Iona R.
Malanchuk

Variety is the spice in Iona M. Malanchuk's professional life. "Reference questions come in daily by phone, e-mail, and in person and oftentimes require me to delve into subject areas that I know little about—but that is just fine with me." Having worked in a graduate math-physics-astronomy library, a rare-book collection, a main university library, education branches in two different states, a business library, and a school library, Malanchuk is "able to switch back and forth from technical services to public services." For her, "the joy in library work comes from the variety of people you work with daily; you just never know what you are going to need next, but they come to you because they need and value your help." No matter what you accomplish in life, she says, "somebody helped you."

Director
Wellfleet Public Library
Wellfleet, Massachusetts



Elaine
McIlroy

Thanks to the diversity, richness, and personal nature of working in a small public library, I have accumulated a long list of satisfactions over the years," says Elaine McIlroy, "from the excitement of building a new library, soon to be equipped with solar panels, and watching it become a hub of community life, to simply opening the doors every day." She calls the "I Love My Librarian" Award an "extraordinary honor" that she shares with the Wellfleet Public Library staff, board, and Friends group. "It's great to know you are loved," she jokes, "in spite of the fact that when people see you around town it reminds them of their overdue library books!" McIlroy calls the poem "To Be of Use" by Marge Piercy her "work mantra" and says "the library has allowed me to be of use in a most open-ended, limitless way."

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Library Media Specialist
Wadleigh Secondary School for the
Performing and Visual Arts
New York, New York



Paul
McIntosh

The I Love My Librarian Award, says Paul McIntosh, affirms “the importance of trying to help young people grow up to be intelligent, productive human beings.” As a library media specialist in New York City, McIntosh says, “I live, for a significant part of each day, five days a week, in a kind of village. Every day, I look into the eyes of young men and women who laugh, cry, misbehave, and valiantly try to make some sense of this often turbulent and beautiful thing called life.” The most satisfying part of his work, he believes, is “when I can help to kindle a fire in the minds of the young men and women with whom I work every day,” see them “excited about reading a book of poetry,” or “embrace the possibility of becoming a doctor” after participating in one of the library’s mentoring programs.

Senior Librarian
The New York Public Library, Mid-
Manhattan Library, The Art Collection
New York, New York



Arezoo
Moseni

Being loved is a huge source of inspiration to me, especially coming from library patrons who find the Art Collection playing an important role in the lives,” says Arezoo Moseni. “Creating a nurturing place for sharing ideas where patrons are informed, inspired, and entertained is quite rewarding,” she says. The concept of nurturing body and mind in the environment of libraries is important to her, as is the incorporation of outdoor space. “This is an exceptionally exciting time to work in libraries,” she observes. “We have the opportunity to redefine the environment of libraries because it is the perfect ‘third place’ for human growth and interaction.” Moseni says she sometimes has “incredibly vivid and detailed dreams of new library spaces with all kinds of amenities for self-improvement.”

TEEN TECH WEEK

MARCH 8-14, 2009

Teen Tech Week offers libraries a chance to showcase all of the nonprint resources they have available to the teens in their community, such as DVDs, databases, audiobooks, online homework help and videogames. Teen Tech Week is sponsored by the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) and is a national initiative for librarians, parents, educators, and other concerned adults that aims to encourage teens to use libraries’ nonprint resources for education and recreation. This year’s theme is “Press Play.” For more information, please visit www.ala.org/teentechweek.



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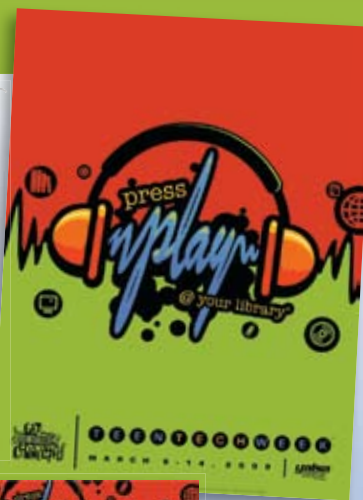
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