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March 2011

Libraries Change Lives



Bookstore volunteer

"I think libraries are misunderstood by so many people, mainly teenagers, these days because when they think of libraries they associate it with school and studying but they are so much more than that." (more)

Bookstore Donation

Every year the Friends' Bookstore donates their yearly profits to the library. This year business was doing so well in the bookstore, they were able to donate \$52,000! These funds go towards library programming, expanding our collections, etc. The Bookstore is run completely by volunteers and their inventory consists of donations from generous donors who want to share their books with other people in the community and help the library at the same time. It really is a win-win situation!



Libraries Change Lives

Sue McMillian was my Confirmation sponsor and as my sponsor she was helping me come up with ideas for community service projects. Since she volunteered at the bookstore she asked me if I would like to do one of my projects at the Winter Book sale in the auditorium. I had a lot of fun volunteering that day, partially because I was surrounded by books, but I have to admit the cookies were part of that too. I met Gail Harris that day and she had me fill out a volunteer form. That summer in 2009, when Sue was scheduled in the store I went with her. The bookstore and I, you could say fell in love with each other because I have not left yet.

I have always liked reading books and that is why I have spent so much time at the library and the bookstore. I think libraries are misunderstood by so many people, mainly teenagers, these days because when they think of libraries they associate it with school and studying but they are so much more than that. Yes, the library is useful for school and studying but it is also a place where you can go somewhere else entirely just by sitting down and reading. It is also a place for people to go if they need to get away from their daily lives and read the newspaper, pick up their favorite magazine, find a movie to enjoy with their families on a Friday night, or just to take one of the many, useful classes that happen at the library. One of my favorite memories from the library before I started in the bookstore, was the photography class I took when I was in middle school. I still have the pictures from that class and still have an interest in photography due to the fun I had taking that class.

Everyone I have met that works or volunteers at the library, is always willing to help you with whatever you might need and is always good for conversation or some funny story. Those people are part of the reason I keep going to the library because they always make it entertaining. They are also always full of good ideas on how to improve the library or create something to help other people. Also, the many things the library offers, like the homework help, different book groups, movie nights, story times for children, and the activities that are offered for the whole family are reasons that make

our library and many others special. I think any place that is open for anyone at any age, is a good thing, and that is one of my reasons for going to the library, encouraging other people to go, and volunteering.

On most Sundays and a couple Saturdays, I volunteer in the bookstore ever since I started with Sue. I enjoy going every week because I never know exactly what I will be doing until I get there. There was one week I got to the bookstore and there was a message on the phone. This lady said that her

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husband had donated some special books of hers and she did not know until after he had donated them and she wanted them back if that was possible. I called her back and got information on what the books looked like and began searching for them. It was not until a couple hours after searching for them that I called her back and told her I had no luck. As, I was talking to her I realized that the area code was not in Minnesota and asked where she was calling from. She was from Rochester Hills, Michigan and had called the wrong library. That is just one of the many things that keeps me coming back each week because there is always something entertaining. That is just one of the many searches customers send me on but those searching I find to be fun because I never know if I will find something that didn't even know they wanted. I like how I can count on a few customers to come in on Sunday and know their name because they come in every Sunday. I have had customers bring me in pictures of their wedding or a graduation because they know I will be there. I also like when whoever I am working with asks me to take books out of their hands if they try to buy anything because even though one book may not cost much, if you're in there for three hours you could walk out with no money.

One of my other favorite parts of working in the store is the wide-variety of people that come in. I have seen people from New Jersey, Colorado, and New York because they are here visiting Mayo Clinic. There are also the people that only come in every couple of

months when they visit family but make sure that they stop in the store before they leave town. There was one man I met a couple of months ago who said he was in town visiting his family and had been out shopping with his wife all day. She had asked him to drop her off at home before he came into the store because he takes too long when he is here. He just laughed like it was not true but by the time he left I would say a good fifteen other customers had already been through the entire store and left. People like that who love books is why I enjoy volunteering in the store each week.

After I graduate from high school and start college, I plan to arrange my schedule so I will still be able to volunteer because it is something I look forward to during my week and also gives me a good excuse to go to the library a lot.

