

Who We Are and What We Do

There are certain occupations that seemingly carry an unwarranted stereotype. One of these occupations has to be that of librarian. The perception of the librarian as an introverted woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a long frumpy skirt, and repeatedly saying "shhhh!" lingers to this day. If these were all requirements of entry into the librarian profession, I would be in major trouble. First of all, I don't have enough hair to put mine in a bun, I don't recall ever wearing a skirt of any kind, and I use my "shhhh" powers in extreme moderation. Librarians certainly aren't all from the same mold, and the work that the profession is doing is constantly changing.

So what exactly is it that the workers in a library do? Do they just read all the time? Do they stamp date due cards and books all day long? Sure, some reading is done here and there, and stamping will never go out of vogue, but there's so much more that those working in a library do. Here's a sample listing of some of the many things I have done in my many years in employment at Bartholomew County Public Library, mostly spent in the Children's Area. These happenings in no particular order range from the major initiatives to the completely wacky:

- I have donned a skeleton suit and been the judge of Halloween costume contests and run the infamous "spider ring toss" booth.
- I have traveled to Clifty Creek elementary to read stories to English as a Second Language students.
- I have written some pretty ridiculous promotional skits for the Library's programs and performed them for after-school groups.
- I have hosted story-times and craft sessions at the Library done completely in Spanish.
- I have spanned Columbus in a big furniture van searching for all the requisite materials needed for a successful Popfest.
- I have taught Spanish language courses to adults, children, and a course for adults and children as a family.
- I have been completely soaked by kids during a "Soak the Librarian" water balloon fight program at Mill Race Park.
- I have found answers to some very profound questions, about anything from antiques to satellite photos.
- I am in the process of developing a collection of books in Spanish for adults to match our already well-developed collection for children.
- I have represented the Library at elementary school intercessions, magic shows, and even the 4-H Baby Contest.
- I have been the umpire for the most rip-roaring game of indoor Library whiffleball ever witnessed.

As you can see, there's so much more to the library worker than meets the eye. You've read just one person's account of some typical library activities, so just imagine all of the other ways that other workers at Bartholomew County Public Library are working to serve you better. We hope to see you at the Public Library very soon.

Tyler Munn is a reference librarian at Bartholomew County Public Library