

Wisconsin Valley Library Service



WVLS Welcomes New Employee



WVLS is proud to welcome its newest staff member, Ashraf Ben Khalifa.

"Ash" was recently hired as the Technology Support Specialist. Before working at WVLS, Ash was part of the "Geek Squad" at Best Buy for the last several years.

Ash was raised in Bizerte, Tunisia, and growing up, he always had an interest in IT and in exploring technology. So far, he is enjoying his role at WVLS.

"I really like the friendly environment and how the organization runs," Ash said. "The path is very clear in terms of what we need to accomplish for our libraries."

Ash said he is learning a lot, and is using several of his IT skills in this position.

When he's not working, he enjoys hiking, traveling, photography, and being outdoors. He can be reached at abenkhalifa@wvls.org or 715-261-7254.

Welcome, Ash!

Sepnafski Receives Award at WLA



In August, the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) Awards and Honors Committee selected WVLS Director Marla Sepnafski as its 2019 Librarian of the Year. On October 10, Sepnafski received her award at the WLA Annual Conference at the Kalahari Convention Center in Wisconsin Dells.

This annual award is given to a Wisconsin librarian in recognition of outstanding leadership and accomplishment in library service.

Several members of the WVLS Board, WVLS staff, WVLS member librarians, and library colleagues across the state attended the Awards Reception to see Sepnafski receive her plaque, and celebrated with her.

"I was honored to be a part of honoring Marla and her body of work," said Sherry Machones, director of the Northern Waters Library Service. "Working with and for Marla over the years has been an amazing experience and I can't wait to continue. I feel wholeheartedly that this award is long overdue!"

After several awards were presented, Sepnafski was the final award recipient at the reception.

"Thank you to member library colleagues, for your instructive feedback and creative guidance, and for whom improvements to WVLS would not be possible," Sepnafski said, in her speech. "Your passion for service, your work ethic, your devotion to the patrons in your community, is nothing less than inspiring."

Pictured in the photo, from left to right: Sonja Ackerman (Marathon County rep), Alice Sturzl (former Forest County rep), Michael Otten (Marathon County rep), Louise Olszewski (Clark County rep), Marla Sepnafski (WVLS Director), Douglas Lay (Marathon County rep), and Tom Bobrofsky (Clark County rep).

Congratulations, Marla!



When I first started at MCPL seven years ago, I was his most famous book character, the Pigeon. Over the years, I have noticed that kids of all ages are enamored with construction machines, buses, tractors, and all things that go.

When I moved to Madison as a young adult, navigating the city bus was a whole new world for me. Thinking about fun, new story time ideas, why not combine the Pigeon with the vehicle he

desperately wants to drive: a bus! From there, Books on the Bus developed. I reached out to Wausau Metro Ride and was introduced to Megan Newman, the Transit Operations Supervisor. Megan was more than happy to partner up and educate patrons about public transit.

Megan and I decided to launch this program in October. Due to the limited space on a bus, we had different story times and “runs.” We offered 30-minute increments that included 10-15 minutes of stories and songs, time for questions about the bus, and a quick ride around downtown Wausau. We read some favorite books like "Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus" by Mo Willems, "My Bus" by Byron Barton, and "The Seals on the Bus" by Lenny Hort. Since we were on a bus, we absolutely had to sing “The Wheels on the Bus.”

Megan drove us around, and we talked about how you're allowed to stand on the bus if seats aren't available, how to stop the bus when your stop is coming up next, and if dogs and cats are allowed on the city bus (fun fact: they are, as long as they are in a carrier.) For many kids, it was their first time on a city bus.



Overall, the program was a hit. So many kids and parents were excited and exclaimed “it's like we're on an episode of Mr. Roger's Neighborhood!” If you would like to try this program and don't have a city bus in your town, try partnering with a school bus company. There are several great school bus books out there like I'm Your Bus by Marilyn Singer, I'm Smart by Kate McMullan, and The Little School Bus by Margery Cuyler.

- Submitted by Taylor Weinfurter, Youth Services Librarian at MCPL - Wausau. You can contact Taylor about this program at taylor.weinfurter@co.marathon.wi.us or 715-261-7220.



What can a library director do in their spare time? Build more libraries!

At least, that's what Tammie Blomberg, director of the Rib Lake Public Library, has been doing this past year. Blomberg recently learned of and started volunteering for an organization called Village Book Builders. Village Book Builders is a nonprofit organization based in Green Bay, started by Tyler and Rebekah Clark. The

The organization has already built eight libraries, with the most recent being in Nepal and Malawi. Blomberg is working on developing training materials for the project leaders and local volunteers to help them run their new libraries. Blomberg conducted a poster session about Village Book Builders at the WLA Conference in Wisconsin Dells.

For more information on Village Book Builders, visit www.villagebookbuilders.org or contact Tammie Blomberg at director@riblakepl.org.

Opportunities in Professional Development

THE INFORMATION SCHOOL
iSchool @ UW-Madison

**SCHOOL OF
Information Studies**

Chippewa Valley
**Technical
College**

Wisconsin is fortunate to have educational institutions that focus on library studies and practices. Along with the [iSchool at UW-Madison](http://www.libraryschool.org) and the [School of Information Studies at UW-Milwaukee](http://www.libraryschool.org),

Chippewa Valley Technical College is now offering an associate's degree in [Library & Information Services](http://www.libraryschool.org). April Lammert, Library Technician at the Demmer Public Library in Three Lakes is currently enrolled in this program.

"My classes fuel conversations with my director, assistant director and other staff," Lammert said. "I'm not only able to learn about my own library's policies, collections, and thoughts on the shifting dynamic of libraries, but I'm able to see these things more clearly."

Lammert said that one of her first classes talked about the library now as a "third space" for people. At that same time, the Demmer Library was undergoing its remodel, and Lammert could apply what she was learning in real time.

"The instructors are librarians who bring a lot of real life experience into the discussions and assignments," Lammert said. "I really can't tell you how beneficial it is to take these classes while working at a library."

For more information on library professional development at iSchool at UW-Madison, the School of Information Studies at UW-Milwaukee, or Chippewa Valley Technical College, contact WVLS Education Consultant Jamie Matczak at jmatczak@wvls.org or 920-455-0668.

Want something featured in the December newsletter?
Is your library doing something that you want to share?
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