



## Mohawk Valley Library System Outstanding Library Staff Award 2024 Nomination Form

Framed Certificate + \$500 for Library Materials Identified by Bookplate(s)

Please answer the following 3 questions using this form. Make your answers descriptive and concise as you describe the contributions made to foster library services in your community. This written part of the application should be no more than 2 pages total. Please focus on activities that took place over the last 3 years.

You may add up to 2 additional pages of support materials – photos, publicity materials, news stories, etc. The application package may not exceed 4 pages total.

The award is open to any paid employee at an MVLS library. It is awarded to library staff, not library directors.

I nominate Courtney Little affiliated with the Community Library (COB)

Library, for the MVLS Outstanding Library Staff Award

Submitted by Kim Zimmer

Submit nomination via email to [kclingan@mvls.info](mailto:kclingan@mvls.info) by Sunday, September 1, 2024

1. Please describe this staff member's history at your library.

Courtney was hired as a Library Assistant for Youth Services in April 2022, having moved to upstate New York a short time earlier. She brought with her valuable experience and graduate-level training as an educator in museum settings and had volunteered previously at Schoharie Free Library. Her current position at The Community Library is her first paid, professional library job.

After several months in her current position, Courtney enrolled in the Information Sciences graduate degree program at the University at Albany, though she has already demonstrated her commitment to self-directed professional development and proven herself effective in all aspects of her position. In fact, many of her most impressive achievements at our library have been completed while she worked a part-time schedule and was simultaneously pursuing a library degree.

2. What, specifically, did the nominee do to earn your nomination? Where and when did the activities and services take place?

Despite serving in a less-than-full-time position, Courtney has not only far exceeded expectations in the areas of the programming and collection development, but has also demonstrated a consistent willingness to introduce creative new ideas and collaborate effectively with other library staff in areas outside her direct responsibility. Among these efforts are the development of a new teen newsletter, co-management of our social media output, continuation of a metadata project begun by a former employee, and the successful pursuit and implementation of grants to support programs and the acquisition of children's materials.

Within months of joining our staff, Courtney oversaw the complete reorganization of our Children's Room, reinvigorated and expanded our Story Time programming, strengthened our juvenile and young adult collections, and worked to broaden teen engagement efforts with new library resources and programming for that important but long-neglected demographic.

Beyond her efforts in these traditional areas, Courtney has developed new All Ages programs with our Adult Services Librarian, particularly in the realm of arts and crafts programming, where her creativity and breadth of practical skills has been especially valuable to us. In addition, she has been tireless in her outreach efforts, forming strong relationships across the community, not only with school librarians in our service area, but also through engagement with local business owners, merchants, and community organizations.

3. How did your library/community benefit from this effort? How was it successful?

Her efforts have resulted in impressive increases in the number of programs offered, program attendance, and circulation. Over the past two and a half years, Courtney has scheduled an average of just over 16 programs per month. Program attendance by those 18 years-old and younger increased 44% from 2022 to 2023 and is on track to increase again by the end of 2024.

Evidence of her careful collection development practices and promotional activities is apparent in circulation statistics for the children and young adult collections. Circulation of children's books has nearly doubled (i.e., a 92% increase) in the two years since Courtney joined our team. The popularity of her Story Time programs has contributed to a 75% increase in the circulation of picture books alone. Similarly, her programming and outreach to teens has increased circulation of Young Adult Fiction and Young Adult Graphic novels by 98% since she arrived.

Beyond these more easily quantifiable measures of Courtney's impact, staff and administration have expressed their appreciation of her sunny demeanor, talent at communicating effectively with patrons of all ages, and her willingness to help with whatever needs doing from staffing the circulation desk to refilling paper towels in the bathroom.

Courtney has demonstrated her value in myriad ways since she joined The Community Library team and we believe she deserves recognition from the broader MVLS community as well.

**Return via email to Kate Clingan at [kclingan@mvls.info](mailto:kclingan@mvls.info) by  
Sunday, September 1, 2024**



# C-R, SCS battle over books

Twelve high school students fielded questions about what they had read for the Battle of the Books competition on Saturday.

And in the end, Cobleskill-Richmondville's Fighting Wildcats came out the winners at The Community Library.

The Wildcats—Alexander Knowles, Val Knowles, Zoe Roberts and Fiona Wilkinson—edged a team from Schoharie Junior-Senior High and another C-R team.

The Schoharie Overbooked Worms of Claire Wray, Georgiana

Carhide, Eliza Cater and Ivy Wray took second place.

Oliver Schel, Abby Smith, Annika Falco and Thomas McAllister of C-R's Shelf Confidence team finished third.

Starting in December, students had to read nearly 20 books to prepare for the Battle.

The Battle of the Books naturally promotes reading, but it does more, C-R High School Librarian Nancy Goldblatt said.

"It encourages talking about what we read, teamwork and perseverance," Ms. Goldblatt said.

"The Battle is the culminating event of all the work students put in over many months."

Schoharie High School Librarian Marion Burghart enjoyed the contest.

"Since this was Schoharie's first experience doing a Battle of the Books, we were pleased to come in second place," Ms. Burghart said.

The Community Library and the Friends of the Community Library, along with the high schools, coordinated the battle.

Library Trustee Julia Walter pitched questions to the students, Library Youth Services Director Courtney Little kept score and Sally Stroh was the timekeeper.

Cobleskill-Richmondville held a Battle of the Books for middle school teams earlier this month.



Fiona Wilkinson of Cobleskill-Richmondville's Fighting Wildcats shows the team's first-place prize after they won the Battle of the Books at The Community Library Saturday. With Fiona, from left, are Alexander Knowles, Val Knowles and Zoe Roberts.—Photo by Nancy Goldblatt



Cobleskill-Richmondville High School Librarian Nancy Goldblatt reviews rules for the Battle of the Books.

Schoharie Librarian and coach Marion Burghart watches as her team answers a question.

Schoharie's Overbooked Worms, from left, are Ivy

