



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 Sam Zimmerman affiliated with the Fort Plain Free
Library, for the MVLS Outstanding Library Staff Award

Submitted by: Fort Plain Free Library - staff members and board

Submit nomination via email to kclingan@mvls.info by Sunday, September 1, 2024

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

We happen to know the exact date that we first met Sam: July 3rd, 2019, when she painted a beautiful square for the library's community art collage as part of Fort Plain's annual Independence Day celebration! Then, COVID happened. Two years later, we encountered Sam again when she volunteered to help with our book sale, cheerfully greeting patrons and carrying an enormous amount of books. A staffing opening allowed her to be hired as a part-time employee later that year, and she's since become a full-time member of our staff, working at the circulation desk and leading numerous library programs (and continuing to carry an enormous amount of books).

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

Because Sam is a thoughtful library worker, she was interested in creating promotional materials for the Summer Reading Program. Because Sam is also a humongous nerd, trading cards seemed like an obvious choice. We had really enjoyed being part of previous summer programs designed to encourage patron movement between libraries, including the passports and treasure maps of the past two years we were excited about the possibility of cards serving as a similar collectible this year. Sam would eventually create unique front and back designs for each of our system's fourteen libraries (as well as a card for MVLS itself), incorporating input from directors and staff throughout the system, and researching printing companies to find cards that would be both affordable and professional enough to stand proudly alongside any kid's Pokémon collection. Sam also worked to create a map of participating libraries (accessible via a QR code on the back of the trading cards, allowing patrons to easily see the locations and hours of each library), as well as promotional materials for use on social media, available to library and MVLS staff via a shared folder.

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

We were really pleased with the response from our Summer Reading Program participants, which included some kids who were so excited to collect library cards that they bought their own binders to keep them in! We were also very pleased by the number of visitors we had from other libraries who had come specifically for cards, and by the comments we heard from our own patrons who had made it their mission to visit every library (these often included mentions of pleasant staff interactions and things they had enjoyed about their visits). This isn't the first program designed to encourage visits between libraries, but we do still find that some patrons aren't fully aware of all the programs and services their library cards allow them to access beyond their home library, or how close together many of our system's libraries really are. Our hope is that, by offering collectibles that are tied to specific memories of particular libraries, we can encourage patrons to take advantage of all our system has to offer!

We were also pleased to see that the MVLS-GO Library Trading Card program garnered lots of attention from various local news outlets, including News10 ABC (https://www.news10.com/news/local-libraries-giving-out-original-trading-cards/?fbclid=IwY2xjawE9zPNleHRuA2FibQIxMQABHbIs4DpDOICYgKki9ct5BwxpocwVmDlpi-NisDKx2HJzDo4KGC67lqymVg_aem_coTC3nUIRhM-Va4cr9Cf1A), the Daily Gazette (https://www.dailygazette.com/the_recorder/news/library-trading-cards/article_78697d52-5a76-11ef-bf42-f76472ba5806.html), and the Cobleskill Times Journal (<https://www.cobleskilltimesjournal.com/article.asp?id=106822>).

**Return via email to Kate Clingan at kclingan@mvls.info by
Sunday, September 1, 2024**