

MAGAZINE

Megan Del Corso gives insider's look at Stark Library

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Del Corso is the collections and technical services director. Here she shares what her job entails, how the library works to make each branch diverse, how the library chooses collections and more.

Q. As Collections and Technical Services Director, what does your day-to-day job look like?

A. My day-to-day job includes meetings, emails and project work, as well as time for learning and planning. Most importantly, I collaborate with my department managers and other staff members who offer valuable input about all aspects of the collection.

Q. Each library in the Stark Library system is diverse. Your site mentions that equal access is one of your key values. Can you expand on what this means for each library?

A. Equal access means that everyone is welcome to visit our locations (either in person or virtually) and when they arrive, they will find balanced collections that are inclusive, forward-thinking and as diverse and unique as the communities we serve. It also refers to the steps we have taken to remove practical barriers to access, including eliminating overdue fines, expanding virtual offerings and extending open hours.

More: Stark Library CEO Mary Ellen Icaza shares recent, favorite books

Q. How does the library go about choosing what collections to have and highlight at each branch?

A. Stark Library has a Collection Development Policy that serves as a guide for staff who select materials. Essentially, items for the collection are chosen to anticipate, support and

respond to the diverse needs of community residents of all ages and backgrounds. Anticipated demand, system-wide availability, physical space limitations and available budgets are all factors taken into consideration when building collections. Choosing which materials to highlight is a cooperative effort between materials selectors and branch or department managers and staff. Displays should reflect the same diversity we strive to build in our collections and invite patrons to learn, explore and check materials out.

Q. Your site mentions that you assess how the collections are used by the community. How do you go about doing this?

A. We use several collection performance tools to assess how materials are used. First and foremost, we use these tools to review and report on the circulation statistics for each of our locations every month. We can dive deeper into information that highlights the percentage of materials we own in different areas of the collection, as well as how often patrons check those items out. Public service managers and staff play a key role by interacting with community members and sharing general information about materials use and patron requests.

More: Stark Library's Derek Gordon shares favorite books, audiobooks

Q. If you could tell About readers one thing about Stark Library, what would you want them to know?

A. I want everyone to know that our focus is on the people we serve of all ages, cultures, beliefs and identities, including those who visit the library frequently and those who haven't discovered us yet. We exist to welcome people, to listen and respond to their needs, and to create an environment where they can learn from and about one another while pursuing their own, self-determined path.

Q. How did you come to work at the library in your current position?

A. I started work in libraries in 2005 and joined Stark Library as a Children's Librarian in 2007. I moved into a supervisory role relatively quickly and managed several library branches before landing at Main Library in 2017. I began work as the Collections and Technical Services director in August and, as with every step in my career path, I've learned a great deal from the knowledge and generosity of my fellow staff members.

Q. What's your favorite thing about the library?

A. My favorite thing is the library's focus on inclusivity and dedication to community awareness and support. I love the idea that the library is a free resource that offers more than

a consumer experience; it's an opportunity for people to connect and enrich their own lives and to share that experience with their families and friends.

More: Stark Library's Julia Shaheen shares her love for cookbooks and young adult novels

On Megan's Bookshelf

What are you currently reading?

"Whereabouts" by Jhumpa Lahiri. I picked up this book by chance and was immediately absorbed in the first-person narrative of a woman at a crossroads during midlife, articulating with reverence the ordinary but deeply meaningful details of daily existence.

What's your favorite book of all time?

"Dear Mr. Henshaw" by Beverly Cleary. This was a childhood favorite that I love to this day because it shares the perspective of a child in a relatable and imperfect situation, using creativity and everyday courage to express himself and navigate the challenges of his school and home life.

Have you ever read a book that changed your life or your views on a specific topic?

"Operating Instructions: A Journal of My Son's First Year" by Anne Lamott. This book introduced me to one of my favorite authors and invited me into a world of genuine and funny truth-telling about motherhood, relationships and spirituality, where flawed parents (and people) are loved and welcome.

What is the last book that made you laugh out loud?

"Wow, No Thank You" by Samantha Irby. I love the author's down-to-earth and deadpan humor, and her books are comprised of engaging essays about life as a creative person who gains success, embraces physical and mental health challenges, and generally has a unique and wickedly funny take on life and culture.

Who is your favorite author and why?

Jack Gantos is one of my favorites. He is a fantastic storyteller, and his series books for young readers are full of wild characters and crazy adventures, all driven by the earnest and often amusing perspective of spunky and determined lead characters.

What is your go-to book recommendation?

“The Mr. Putter and Tabby” series by Cynthia Rylant is one I recommend for children. These stories revolve around the daily adventures of older adult Mr. Putter and his cat, Tabby, and welcome young readers into a gentle and good-natured space with a unique perspective on life.

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