

## **Info\*Nation: At the Core**

Back in the days of sensible shoes, buns and shushing (and YES, those days are past) the library world held the same basic values it does today. If any of the concepts below inspire you with noble aspirations, you may have found your calling - in libraries.

*The current climate for librarians in Canada is one that promotes the importance of civic responsibility, community outreach, information policy design and professional advocacy work.*

*- Nicole Godin, Librarian, Bell Canada*

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## **Literacy & Education**

People who work in libraries (along with a few others) believe that literacy is a basic human right. Not surprisingly, many of us come to this field from a long love affair with books. Libraries are dedicated to education: from academic libraries' support of research and scholarship; to providing resources in a public library in areas like business and children's reference; to school libraries that support the curriculum and create dynamic learning environments for kids. Reading and learning foster self-improvement and create an informed and thoughtful citizenry. Life-long learning. It's a good thing.

*With the current emphasis on play-based, early learning and literacy programs for infants and preschoolers, the library has gone well beyond story times for preschoolers. Now there are Early Years partnerships, Baby Time programs, family drop-ins and a great variety of programs that help develop literacy and a love of books in young children, and help parents discover all the ways they are crucial to this process.*

*- Judi McCallum, Manager, Angus Glen Branch, Markham Public Libraries*

## **Serving the Public**

Libraries serve a variety of communities, one of them being "the public," for whom public libraries exist (big surprise there). Public libraries are publicly-supported institutions that play an important role in democratic society. Here's where the humanitarian value for serving the public good comes in. Library workers love to help people and make society better. They also believe in the library as the heart of the

Info\*Nation Core Values

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community, as a public space whose mission is not only educational and informational, but recreational too. Community events, group meetings, outreach programs, skill development workshops - and yes, reading - all bring people together at the public library. That's right: libraries aren't just shelves and books; in fact they are pretty magical places.

*I love working with people, which is a good thing as the majority of my time is spent dealing with the public, staff and colleagues. Over the course of my profession I have learned volumes and continue to learn something new on a daily basis. That is what is so incredible about this profession and that is why I love my job so much.*

*- Moe Hosseini-Ara, Manager, Markham Village Library*

## **Intellectual Freedom**

What could be more noble than the advancement of truth and the quest for knowledge? We can't think of anything. Of course, librarians and library technicians recognize that there are many truths, and we are dedicated to ensuring people have access to all of them, even if the ideas are unorthodox or objectionable to some (don't get us started on censorship).

*The people I work with are from varied academic backgrounds (from chemistry to history), are well-traveled, and value individuality and innovation.*

*- Aimee Ellis, Manager, Departmental Library, Yukon Energy Mines and Resources Library, Whitehorse*

## **Access to Information**

Anyone should have access to information they want, when they want it, for no (or, let's be realistic, minimal) charge. The world of literature, scholarship and information is not just for elites: libraries exist to get everyone -- regardless of geography, socioeconomic status, age or ethnicity -- the stuff they want. Ensuring such equity of access is an important part of our mission to bridge the "information divide." This right to information is always balanced with individuals' right to privacy and confidentiality.

*Reference work in a public library was full of variety, challenge, intellectual stimulation, fun, and a feeling that one's work truly made a difference in people's lives. A day in my life included*

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*helping a visiting businessperson find information for importing from Germany, and then helping that same patron find information for his son's assignment on the history of hockey.*  
- Fiona Black, Director, School of Information Management  
Dalhousie University

## **Information Intermediary**

The role of librarians and library technicians as mediators between people and the complex world of information is becoming ever greater and more important. Whether this linkage takes place in the digital or the physical world, the information professional is not (any longer) the person who knows the answer to any question; but he or she knows how to find that answer and wants to help others learn how to find it themselves (in librarian-speak this is called "information literacy").

*The culture of the library profession includes collegiality, cooperation and a sincere desire to strengthen the connection between people and information.*

- David Burke, Dalhousie School of Information Management, Class of 2006

## **Preservation**

One of the coolest things about libraries is what storehouses of information they are. Ever since the "Keepers of the Tablets" in ancient Sumeria started collecting those slabs of clay, libraries have acquired and stored the works of humanity, keeping them safe for posterity. The value of preservation endures in archival, research, and special collections of unique and rare items.

*Every project that I contribute to has its own story, and it is wonderful to be able to preserve it, and let other people hear these stories. It is satisfying knowing that I am doing the best I can to make the history of my region accessible to the public.*

- Erin Suliak, NWT Archives

## **Professionalism**

Ask anyone in a library and they'll agree that the profession is a community of collegiality, diversity, respect and collaboration. The library and information professions are committed to staffing libraries with educated and qualified people. Providing the highest level of

service to the public demands that people who work in libraries have the highest level of knowledge and skills, so continuing education - through conferences, workshops, etc. - is a big part of a career in libraries (don't think you're going to be done learning once you get that piece of paper).

*I am committed to exploring the reaches of my profession, to the idea that to be an 'information professional' is not simply to accept a title conferred at the end of a fixed course of study, but a designation earned with time and experience and participation. I am committed to the idea that advocacy is a professional responsibility, that engagement with a wider community is an imperative rather than a right.*

*- Sarah Pollard, Research Officer, Strategic Office Library & Archives Canada*