

## Love Libraries Competition: Top Ten New Librarians 2007

### ENTRY FORM

**Name:** Alexis Dimyan  
Community Librarian, Children's Services

**Age:** 27

**Length of service (three years maximum):** 10 months

**Library service:** Luton Libraries

- **Why have you chosen to make a career in public libraries?**

I wanted a job that was imaginative, creative, interesting, exciting, challenging, flexible, adventurous, eye-opening, stimulating, dynamic, uplifting, inspiring, heady, captivating, people-centred, laughter-filled and bustling with variety. This is why I have chosen a career in public libraries – you can experience all these emotions and many more in providing a service to all user groups, which people enjoy and take great pride in. What better or more satisfying job could there be?

- **What is it about library work that you enjoy?**

The fact that it is so endlessly eclectic. One day I might be doing a regular storytime for under 5s followed by a class visit from one of the local schools, who want to find out what kind of books there are available. This could be followed by an elderly person needing guidance on using the PC or a regular customer needing assistance in choosing books. Then, I might visit a school to give an assembly in order to promote library events. On top of this is the stockwork and meeting up regularly with other members of the children's team to decide what new and exciting books to order for Luton libraries. Then, there all the other bits in between, like children making funny comments. It's impossible to get bored. It's impossible not to smile and feel good when you know someone has walked away from the library having been satisfied.

- **Why do you think libraries are important?**

I believe passionately that libraries have vital role to play in people's well-being, in terms of providing services and accessible information in a range of formats that can meet the needs of every user in the community. They are literary places, social places, community spaces, information spaces, relaxing spaces but most importantly of all they are democratic spaces. They are multi-dimensional spaces where people of all ages, backgrounds, ethnicity, gender or disability can feel at home and have ready access to books, information and learning at their fingertips.

- **What has been your biggest achievement in the role?**

Although I feel that I have achieved a number of things in my present role, my biggest achievement has been to help set up, organise and run a monthly rhymetime sessions on Sundays for Dads and toddlers. Regular rhymetime and storytime sessions are held at all the libraries in Luton but the

majority of adults attending are female. Consultation with other members of staff indicated that by having a rhymetime session aimed explicitly at fathers, then they would be more likely to attend. This initiative has resulted in positive feedback from the fathers who attend the group, saying how much they enjoyed the sessions – due to their relaxing, social and enjoyable atmosphere – and hoped that there would be more regular sessions.

- **How have you helped to improve your service?**

One of my main responsibilities is promoting the library service to a range of user groups in Luton. Whether it be through class visits, storytime sessions, summer reading challenge events, school assembly visits, attending family literacy groups, visiting PEEP groups, delivering storytelling sessions in community centres, running “One Book for Luton” events, handing out Bookstart packs at the annual summer picnic for children, organising Roald Dahl Day activities or consulting with the general public about suggestions for the development of the Central Library, I feel that I have promoted Luton library service at every available opportunity.

This close interaction with diverse people in the community has helped to not only make Luton libraries more visible but enabled me to obtain feedback about how best to deliver the services that Luton library service provides. A tangible example of the improvement in service would be the increase in the number of people attending the regular time for a rhyme sessions that I run at a branch library. This has been due to outreach promotion, word of mouth publicity and a strong impetus to spread the message that these sessions are fun!

- **Why do you deserve to be recognised as a Top Ten New Librarian?**

I think that I deserve to be recognised as a Top Ten New librarian because I believe that I bring passion, enthusiasm, excitement and creativity to the work I do. It is immensely satisfying to see the impact this has on the young people who visit the library and the children I visit doing outreach events in the community.

Public libraries are treasure troves, teeming with diverse resources, which need to be promoted all the time so that users can get the best use out of them and moreover enjoy what their local library has to offer. I recognise that my role is to engage and enthuse with the community, particularly children and young people, spreading the word that libraries are cool, buzzing and happening places to be.

Being a children’s librarian in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is absolutely thrilling, immensely rewarding and completely life-enhancing. There are challenges to overcome but the rewards are infinite. New developments are on the horizon in Luton Libraries. These include: developing a programme of events as part of the National Year of Reading, implementing school registration initiatives to ensure that every child in Luton has a library card and Luton Libraries becoming part of a cultural services trust which will create great potential for partnerships and better services for the local community. This desire to embrace the future and not rest on one’s laurels drives me on and fills me with much excitement when thinking about the massive impact that libraries have on people’s lives.