

MY JOB

Circulation librarian puts more than books on the table

NAME: Rebecca Steffen

MY JOB: Circulation librarian at the Rapid City Public Library

So what is the primary thing you do as a circulation librarian?

I communicate with SDLN (South Dakota Library Network) about our catalog. SDLN runs the catalog that patrons search. I help make sure to keep the catalog running and let people know if it goes down.

So, if I do an online search and e-mail a librarian, are you the librarian I'm going to talk to?

Yes, that is me a lot of the time. I also handle patron accounts.

Why did you decide to become a librarian?

Well, I was originally going to be a teacher. Then I got shindigged into a work-study job in a library, and here I am. I got a library minor through Black Hills State, and now I'm working on my master's. It seems like that's how a lot of people end up as librarians.



Crystal Hohenthaner/Journal staff

Rebecca Steffen is the circulation librarian at the Rapid City Public Library.

They pick up a library job somewhere and it just sticks.

What is your favorite part of working at the Rapid City Public Library?

Working with the staff. I do a lot of scheduling, and I lead a group working on social networking site training.

Does the library have a MySpace page?

Yes, and it's my baby. I work on it all the time. (http://www.myspace.com/rc-pl_teens)

You aren't exactly the cliché librarian type. Does your age cause any problems around here?

Oh, no, I fit in really well. When I don't think about it, my age isn't really an issue. When I first got here, I was

a little bit uncomfortable being so young, but I'm working with people who have so much experience and they are happy to help me out. I think it's a good mix for my enthusiasm. They help bring me back to earth when I get too excited.

I do try not to wear my hair in a bun too often, but I don't think my age really makes a difference.

I have a niche here. Plus it helps when I deal with the high school kids because there isn't as big a difference in our ages. When I go upstairs to play "Guitar Hero" with the kids, it isn't as weird.

Wait, the library has "Guitar Hero"?

Yes, we have gaming every Wednesday here at the downtown location and on Tuesdays at the north branch. We have a Wii, and we play "Guitar Hero."

That's a lot different than when I had to come down here after school and wait for my ride. I had to sit all by myself and do homework.

Oh, we have a lot of kids that come down here in the afternoons after school nowadays. And we have a lot more to offer than just books. We are a media center full of DVDs and music; we host community events. We have programs for people of all ages to get involved in. The library is a community gathering place. Oh, and don't forget the coffee shop. I'm addicted to it.

What's the hardest part of your job?

When we put a whole bunch of work into a program and it's a dud.

When you put your heart and soul into something and like 10 people show up — and five of them are your friends — it's really hard.

And we just can't anticipate what's going to be successful and what's going to flop.

But sometimes the opposite happens. We had a play dough program recently and we were hoping for like 50 attendees, and over 100 showed up.

— Crystal Hohenthaner, Journal staff