

Residents invited to vote for their favorite county librarian

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I Love My Librarian!
2016 Award

Charles County residents can now vote for their favorite local librarian from PD Brown Memorial Library, Waldorf West Library, and the Charles County Public Library System administration now through Sept. 19.

Submitted Photo

The next winner of the national "I Love My Librarian" award could be from Charles County. The Charles County Public Library System is accepting residents' nominations for their favorite librarian through Sept. 19.

The "I Love My Librarian" award was established to show appreciation for the contributions of outstanding librarians and recognize their accomplishments. The community can now go online and vote for one of four librarians nominated in Charles County: Alyssa Williams, Melissa Lauber, Dontanà McPherson-Joseph and Barbara Thorp.

Janet Salazar, director of the library system, said librarians are valuable community resources that connect people to the information, opportunities and critical technology necessary to help improve their quality of life. She also believes that the county has some really great librarians and hopes at least one of them ends up as one of the top 10 national winners of the contest.

“Each librarian is different in their own way,” Salazar said. “I’m very happy that Barbara has just joined us in the last couple of months to work with the children and she has done some awesome things. Dontanà has done a lot of work with the LGBTQ community and bringing that to the forefront of the community. Melissa is also a great asset. Alyssa has been great to work with and I could not do my job without her.”

Every year, up to 10 librarians are recognized nationally with each receiving a \$5,000 cash award, a plaque and a travel stipend to attend the awards ceremony and reception in New York City, hosted by Carnegie Corporation of New York. Since the award’s inception in 2008, patrons across the U.S. have shared nearly 16,000 nominations for their favorite librarians. A total of 80 librarians have won the award to date.

Each nominee must be a librarian with a master’s degree from a program accredited by the American Library Association in library and information studies or a master’s degree with a specialty in school library media from an educational unit accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education. Nominees must be currently working in the U.S. in a public library, a library at an accredited two- or four-year college or university or at an accredited K-12 school.

Williams, assistant director of Charles County Public Library System, said the contest is raising awareness of the importance of accessible community resources.

“Although I’m more behind-the-scenes, I work hard to make sure the library is working and provide the access to our staff that the community can take advantage of,” Williams said. “This contest recognizes the wonderful work that is being done in our community and recognizes all of the people who live and work in Charles County.”

“I have been a librarian for 15 years and I am driven to unite people with the resources they need to succeed — whether it’s for employment, school, hobby or best seller novels,” said Lauber, Waldorf West Library public services librarian. “It’s a treat to have all of this information at hand. It shows that we are important and librarians are out there changing people’s lives.”

“This contest is very diverse and shows the country that not all librarians wear buns, are women or have tattoos,” said McPherson-Joseph, Waldorf West Library public services librarian. “Charles County residents should vote to represent hometown pride and brag on this great group of diverse librarians.”



Thorp, P.D. Brown Memorial Library children’s supervisor, said she loves her customers and said if they feel the same way about her, she hopes they will go online and cast their vote.

“I’ve worked really hard as a librarian for the last decade so I wanted to nominate myself,” Thorp said. “It would be nice to have a little recognition every now and then for us librarians.”

The award is a collaborative program of Carnegie Corporation of New York, the New York Public Library, The New York Times newspaper and the American Library Association. The ALA administers the award through their public awareness office, which promotes the value of libraries and staff.

“We want our community to vote for one of the four librarian candidates so that others can see on a national level the great things our county’s librarians are doing,” Salazar said.

Nominations are accepted through Sept. 19 with winners announced in November. To vote for a favorite Charles County librarian, go to www.ilovelibraries.org/lovemylibrarian.

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