



2023 Library Visit Interview Form

Library Name: Monticello Public Library

Certification Grade: 3

Date of visit: 09-28-2023

Library staff present at the visit: Brenda Massei

SCLS staff present: Andrew Hoks

Amount of time spent at visit: 45 minutes

[Please limit this section to the answers to the specific questions, and include as much detail as possible. Report other information or observations in the “other information” section below.]

1. What’s new and/or innovative at your library?

Brenda had difficulty answering this question. The amount of programming at the library has increased immensely since Brenda started working at the library. The new Adult Services Librarian, Siri, is coming up with new programming ideas for adults. The children’s programming is focused on engineering and other STEAM-oriented topics. Brenda feels the students have enough access to technology at home and school, so she likes to emphasize hands-on programming.

2. What are the next projects (big or small) on your library’s to-do list in the coming year?

The library will be participating in the “We Cope” program. Green County, SCLS, SWLS and UW-Extension are all participants according to Brenda. There will be seven 1-hour classes, over the course of seven weeks. The classes will include activities which promote positive mental health, meditation, and self-awareness.

The library is planning a holiday event for the entire community.

Brenda is setting some goals for employees. She would like the staff to learn CPR and for at least one person to become a notary public.

Brenda started as Director in July, so she has been hyper-focused on the budget.

3. What challenges or concerns is your library facing now and in the near future?

The library is open 50 hours per week, but only has three people to staff it. When someone is on vacation or out sick, someone else has to work overtime to cover. Brenda is looking at hiring a page. Staffing is very important to Brenda, because she wants the community to find the library reliable and to always be open during advertised hours.

It’s hard to gauge how many people will show up for programming. She referenced a maritime program that was not attended as well as expected. On the other hand, Brenda prepped materials for four participants for

their Hot Wheels program. 29 patrons showed up! Brenda is still learning what is popular and making sure to log this information for herself and others that could come after her.

Brenda does not consider the school district to be a cooperative ally of the library or a positive force in the community. She looks for gaps emanating from the schools and tries to fill them with programming at the library.

Brenda mentioned the need to build a small community for home schoolers that the library could facilitate.

4. How might SCLS help your library or staff with your challenges, concerns, or projects?

Brenda is thankful for all of the kits SCLS circulates, but she thinks we need to do a better job of making sure all of the contents of the kits are present and not broken. She mentioned some of the kits are outdated (VHS tapes). The Storytime kits could use some improvement. The stop motion kits have some burned out lights. She did talk to SCLS about some of the kits and believes the outdated ones were purged.

SCLS should include a place to report problems with the kits and read the reports before sending the kits on to the next library. Once it arrives, the library doesn't have time to do anything about broken parts before the program starts.

The sewing machine kits are wonderful. Sienna used the papermaking kit at another library and thought it was nice. Brenda has the VR kit now and is learning how to use it.

Brenda thinks SCLS should circulate a fog machine. We should canvass all of the libraries for new kit ideas.

5. What would you like to see SCLS focus on or prioritize in the coming year?

Brenda says the SCLS web site is a treasure trove of information, but it is difficult to navigate and search at times. She would like us to explore a more user-friendly interface.

She thinks SCLS does a great job of communicating, but we can be guilty of information overload at times. I mentioned that this has come up before and that is the reason for the Top Five email that goes out each week. Brenda said she was told early on, "If you can't read everything, just make sure to read Top Five."

Brenda would like a recommendation for free database software, so that she can keep track of program participants. She would like to know if SCLS is already using a program or supports a program as a service. I told her that we do not, but I would reach out if I am mistaken.

6. Is there anything else you'd like to share or discuss?

SCLS is very supportive of new directors. Her board is supposed to support the library, but they don't understand the intricacies of running a library. She knows she can always contact Jean and she will help or refer her to the correct person.

The SCLS Help Desk is amazing and very tolerant of her stupidity (her words).

Other information gathered at the visit (interesting tidbits, general impressions of the library, or alternative topics: