



## 2023 Library Visit Interview Form

**Library Name:** Charles and Jo Ann Lester Library

**Certification Grade:** 1

**Date of visit:** 9/29/2023

**Library staff present at the visit:** Darla Allen

**SCLS staff present:** Kayla Linke

**Amount of time spent at visit:** 1 hour

**[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?**

Nekoosa started a collection of Vox books this week. The library has a close relationship with Domtar Paper, a local paper company. Through the company, they were able to get funds to buy them. They purchased about 35 of them, and around half of them have already been checked out by local patrons within the few days they have had them.

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

New wireless access point: The range of the WiFi will extend into their parking lot.

Meeting room update: This room is used by many people in the community for meetings of all kinds – in person, virtual, and hybrid. The room will get new carpet and paint on the walls. The equipment is also being upgraded, like a new camera, smart TV, and laptop for the room. She is working with Craig Ellefson on this project.

New shelving: The library is looking into getting new shelving for some parts of their library and moving around the layout of the shelving and collections. They have a lot of shorter shelves, and they’d like to get taller shelving in order to make better use of the space. Having taller shelving will give them more space for the children’s collection, graphic novels, manga, and more. They are also looking into getting shelving for their DVDs. Currently for DVDs, they have tables with binders on top of them that show what is in the collection. Patrons have to go to the desk to get the discs for the DVDs. They are transitioning to keeping DVDs in their cases on the shelf, so they need to get shelving for that. A community member (Georgine Buehler Bapat) left the library some money after she passed away which is helping to fund this project.

They are also working on weeding and RFID tagging.

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

Darla talked about the struggle to get the local government to understand the importance of the library. She recently found a ledger of notes from the 1950s that mentioned multiple things that she still struggles with today, such as low wages and bonuses and how the city and library interact with one another (especially through funding). She fights for her library to get adequate benefits, funding, and wages. The part-time workers get paid vacation and sick time because she fought for it.

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

Darla is not sure how SCLS could help, but she is interested in the salary study.

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

Darla is satisfied with the service. Everyone is easy to get ahold of and easy to talk to.

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

This week they had the local school's 4K class come in to tour the library.

They have a new employee, Megan Cremeens, who has a background in special education. She has been a good addition. Megan has been shadowing Jodi to help with training.

While cleaning out the meeting room, Darla decided that it was time to give up their grandfather clock. It was donated a long time ago by a patron who no longer has any family in the area. The clock has needed to be serviced many times in order for it to continue to function. It was given to a regular patron who has always wanted one and also has a friend who knows how to fix them, so it worked out perfectly! The patron was very excited.

She mentioned that Spectrum came in to look at their connections for something about statewide internet, and she had to keep them away from trying to touch SCLS equipment.

The library now closes at 6 instead of 7. The library had very few patrons come in at that time. The change in hours has greatly improved the mental health of the employees, because now they are able to get home earlier, spend more time with their families, and not feel like they barely have any time in the evening to relax. I asked if this had been updated in our Directory yet, and she has submitted a form so that the library hours get updated.

They recently upgraded their security system. There were a couple patrons that were threats to both staff and patrons. The staff now have panic buttons that they can press that will silently call the police.

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

Darla is very active and aware of things happening in the area and has a good relationship with local companies which helps the library get funding for things like the summer reading program and other projects in the library (like the Vox books above!). She mentioned two local companies that are big

supporters of the library, Domtar Paper and Jacoby Custom Cues.

She recommended that I should go up the street to West River Café. After our meeting, I took a stop there to have a slice of their Pumpkin Cream Cheese Pie.

