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More Than Books : University of Dayton, Ohio

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Monday July 3, 2023

More Than Books

By Camila Sánchez-González

The OhioLINK Luminaries is a paid internship program provided to students in academic libraries. The Luminaries program exposes students to a wide range of work experiences based on their interests, curiosities and questions about librarianship.

As an OhioLINK Luminaries intern at the University of Dayton, I had the opportunity to work at Dayton Metro Library. This was also the first time an OhioLINK Luminaries intern completed a rotation at a public library. This was a great experience, as I was embarking on a new position working with a new environment — a public library versus the University of Dayton's Roesch Library, an academic library.

From my experiences in both settings, I have to say that each has its own purposes, weaknesses and strengths. Public libraries serve a wide range of consumers, hence the word public, and provide many resources to its communities. Meanwhile, the University Libraries focus more on an academic setting, given their tailored audiences: students and faculty. What I've learned throughout my internship is that a library constitutes more than just having access to books.

'It takes a village'

During my rotation at Dayton Metro Library, I visited different departments such as patron services, youth services, collection development and newest Americans, and I gained a better understanding of the different ways a public library connects to its patrons, whether that be knowing where to get your next book, assessing usage trends or learning the needs of the community at hand. I didn't anticipate the amount of individuals that work in each department. There is a saying that "it takes a village to raise a child," and the same can be said for public libraries and their resources: It takes a village to provide access to all the resources and services that are available by the click of a button.

For example, throughout my rotation in collection development, I worked with an online selection application called OverDrive, which later transitioned to another app called Libby. This experience gave me the opportunity to select and purchase different e-books and audio titles for the library's collection. This was a gratifying experience because I applied my past skills from working in the University Libraries' collections strategies and services department.

While on a rotation with the newest Americans department, I saw a wide variety of services and programs offered to members of the community from diverse backgrounds. Some of these include ESL (English as a second language) classes; "Talk Table" sessions for practicing English conversation skills; and tutoring sessions.

Education, inclusion, purpose, mission

Public libraries serve as a safe space for many members of the Dayton community. It is a refuge and inclusive space for individuals from all walks of life. Through my conversations with several staff, I was able to learn how they obtained their positions. It was interesting to learn that for many of them, their jobs intersected their love for reading with creating a local and social impact within their communities. Libraries are a vital tool to educate and foster curiosity for learning. Witnessing them pushing this mission forward was encouraging to me, and now I see public libraries in a different light.

Further reading

Read more about the Dayton Metro Library and all its [resources](#).

— *Camila Sánchez-González, a 2023 graduate of the University of Dayton, was the 2022-23 OhioLINK Luminaries intern in the University Libraries.*