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**HPL Patron**

August 2020

I started coming to the Hubbard Public Library to use the computers they have for the public to use. Since the library building had wheelchair access ramps and an elevator (the public computers are on the second floor), it was easy for me to use their computers. My first impressions were that the staff were all wonderful! One of my favorite librarians was then director of Adult Services and Reference. She is now retired, but I will always remember that she was very nice, helpful and very knowledgeable about books, DVDs and computer-related questions, too. I remember that she was always encouraging me to read more!

The library is a large part of my social life; the staff all know me and all are positive and encouraging. In recent years, one of the programs that the library offered was an AmeriCorps program in which job-related assistance was offered to patrons. One day, the director of that program, Jeannette, was at one of the library computers helping a patron with her resume or job search; they were both stuck and asked me if I could help them. I wasn't busy at that time, and I agreed. As we all worked together to solve the problem, Jeannette realized how knowledgeable I was and asked me to help her with the one-on-one computer sessions she offered. I agreed, of course, and soon, I was also helping her with the computer classes she was offering at the library. At first, when she asked me to help with the courses, I felt uncertain about whether or not to say 'yes.' I was always very shy and unsure about myself, but she urged me to give it a try. I asked her what topics the courses covered, and noticed that there was a course on using email. I knew I could do that, and that was the beginning. We did other courses as well, such as 'Introduction to Computers,' and courses in using the Microsoft programs such as Word. After that, I even assisted her with the genealogy course she was offering to interested library patrons. My confidence was growing and I became more sure of myself and what I could accomplish. Jeannette empowered me. And, even after that AmeriCorps program ended, I continued to help library patrons with their computer problems and their use of the library fax, scanning and printing equipment.

Another program at the library which I became involved in recent years (2018) is the "Mats of Love" program. This program involves patron volunteers of all ages (tweens and up) who create sleeping mats for homeless individuals from plastic bags. Volunteers process the plastic bags into 'plarn' (plastic yarn) and this plarn is then crocheted into sleeping mats. These mats are then donated to a local non-profit company which distributes them to homeless individuals. So, we are helping homeless individuals stay dry and warm, and we are helping the planet because this project keeps the plastic bags used to make the mats out of trash and landfills! The group was meeting once a week at the library before the COVID-19 situation, and my role was 'Resident Internet Guru' and comedian. I kept everyone entertained! And, now that the library remains closed for public meetings due to physical distancing and safety concerns, I really miss the people in the group and that social life we had together.

The library is an essential, wonderful part of my life. When the library building was closed in spring/early summer 2020 due to COVID-19, I missed the library staff and all the patrons and other people there. I am proud and happy to be both a patron and a part time volunteer at the Hubbard Public Library!

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