

Sherry Giancola, Educator/Teacher, Retired; HPL Patron:

“I’ve been coming to Hubbard Public Library (HPL) with my children, and now my grandchildren, for more than 33 years. When my children were young, growing up, the families in our neighborhood were really close, and we all thought of our library, HPL, as a neighborhood facility. To this day, I remember the time during the winter, more than thirty years ago, when HPL a ‘Night-time Storytime,’ and my son AJ, and his neighborhood friends Angela, Annie and Abbey were able to wear their pajamas to the program. The children were very excited and loved that they were able to wear their pajamas outside, to the library! [Note: to this day, more than thirty years later, my son recalls that he was able to wear his pajamas to the library. Moreover, he remembers which pajamas he wore that first time; we still have pictures.] I remember that I was very impressed at this novel, innovative idea: nighttime storytime, and, better yet, wearing pajamas!

We always participated in HPL Storytimes. I took AJ, Annie, Abbey and Angela to Storytime programs and numerous other children’s programs at HPL throughout the year. All four children attended the same pre-school, all were five years old at the time and all had names beginning with ‘A’--AJ, my son; Angela; Annie; and Abbey. Children’s Room librarians, Mrs. Russo and Mrs. Grapevine, soon named them the ‘A-Team’! And the ‘A-Team’ all loved this name! They felt so special, so proud, so important, and so loved. Thirty-six years later, I still refer to them as the ‘A-Team’!

Angela, Annie and Abbey all had older brothers; and Angela and my son AJ also had younger siblings. As I said, everyone in the neighborhood was close and we all thought of the HPL as ‘our’ facility, ‘our place.’ Mothers in the neighborhood took turns taking all the children to programs in the Children’s Room, depending on our schedules. I was a teacher, so my schedule ensured that I was able to take everyone to summer programs during the day. And, as a teacher, I remember bragging to my colleagues and friends about HPL, our neighborhood library which had librarians and programs that were ‘cutting-edge,’ and that were not available anywhere else. My three children and the other neighborhood children and families all participated in Summer Reading. This was a community activity and favorite place as children not only learned to read and to love to read, but also received incentives to mark their achievements as they read new books; these incentives included free food coupons, a favorite for both children and parents.

Families in our neighborhood came to HPL for everything, books and beyond! We lived in Hubbard’s Township, and there were few activities available. In addition, we didn’t have cable or access to movies. So we came to HPL to borrow VHS tapes, as well as books. My middle son, Tony, loved the film ‘Pippi Longstocking’ and would watch it time and time again. Eventually, of course, we would have to return it. The Children’s Room librarians would go out their way to hold it for him, and he would be elated when, upon asking for it, they would reply that ‘yes, it was at the library and, yes, he could borrow it again.’

We participated in all Children’s Programs, and have many of the craft and other items made in activity and art programs. For example, my daughter and I participated in a night-time tea party which had a ‘Little Red Riding Hood’ theme. We each made a Little Red Riding Hood doll; each mom made one and each daughter made one as well. We cherish these treasures and the memories they evoke.

Today, 33 years since our first visit to HPL, we are three generations of a family who bring our children and now my grandchildren. Actually, we are frequently more than three generations going to the library. Recently, for instance, I brought my granddaughter Adriana and my mother (she is 87) to the

Children's Room 'Mind & Motion' program. It is excellent motion for all three of us; and my mother loves the exercise. When my sister, who now lives in Cincinnati, visited Hubbard, we brought her three children to HPL and participated in whatever Children's Room programs were being held. She and her family have lived in Japan (three years) as well as Cincinnati and are impressed with the brilliant, creative and innovative programs here at HPL. Thirty-three years ago when I first started visiting the HPL, it and its programs were cutting-edge; today it remains innovative, creative, brilliant and cutting-edge.

The best resource our children have is their local library, HPL. My son, AJ, took his daughter to gymnastic classes at a local facility. He had attended this same facility when he was younger, had participated in many activities there, and had many positive memories and experiences of that place. That is why he returned there with his daughter. However, when he took his daughter there, he was not impressed with the quality of the classes or staff and believed that the kids did not learn and, moreover, that the staff seemed disinterested and uncaring. He was very disappointed; his daughter is very interested in gymnastics and she was also very disappointed in the classes; in addition, the classes were expensive and his time too was invested and valuable. When I mentioned to him that I was writing this story about our family's experiences with HPL, he reminded me of these gymnastics classes experiences, their expense and his and his daughter's disappointment. He commented that HPL had better programs and that they were free. He also noted that the HPL librarians care about the children and that the children learn very much every time they attend a program at or visit HPL!

We all, my family and all the neighborhood and its families, love the HPL. My daughter-in-law and junior member of the 'A-team,' Angela, has continued the tradition of bringing her children to HPL and participating in all the programs offered to children, just as her mother brought her and her siblings to HPL for the children's programs. And, when we are out and about, driving around, if we pass the library, my four-year old granddaughter, Adriana, becomes all excited and says proudly, "There's MY library!" I always reply, 'Yes, Adriana, that is your library.'

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