

Patron Perspectives: Volunteering @ the Library

September 30, 2009

Our Citrus County volunteers have extensive experience and knowledge and bring a special element into the organizations they serve. Nancy M. Riley is one such volunteer at the Central Ridge Library in Beverly Hills. It is nice to know some history of our wonderful volunteers and their backgrounds so we asked Nancy to share with us a little about herself.

Why I volunteer at the library...

I have been a reader and an educator all my life. One of my earliest memories is looking for fairy tales with my father at a little library in the basement of a local school in Dayton, Ohio. I have always loved going to the library and finish each day by reading a book.

I attended the University of Dayton, in Ohio moving to Florida after graduation. I worked in a private school in south Florida before my husband and I moved to Citrus County as newlyweds in 1975. We quickly discovered the little library in downtown across from the Crown hotel....before it was the Crown!



I then attended the University of Florida for an advanced degree in guidance, and earned my masters degree in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of South Florida.

I started my teaching career in Citrus County at Inverness Primary School where I worked for twenty years as a classroom teacher and Curriculum Specialist. I then moved to the Technology Resource Center in Lecanto where I was an Instructional Technology Specialist; but because I missed the school environment, I eventually found myself back as the curriculum specialist at Citrus Springs Middle School. My final assignment was as the Network Specialist at Crystal River High School where I retired about two years ago.

In all those years as an educator, I used the resources provided by the library for my students. I would plan walking field trips to the new Inverness library where we were thrilled by the beautiful new building and lovely children's library. In fact, all teachers in Citrus County depend on the local library system to provide many resources and services to our students and their families

All in my family are avid readers. My children had their own cards as toddlers and every summer we enjoyed the story times with the children's librarian at the Inverness Library. When we lived and traveled on our trawler, libraries were a place we always sought in each new port. And as high school students, the library provided a way for my sons to earn their community service points for graduation.

And now I volunteer at Central Ridge Library. Why volunteer at the library? Having lived and worked in this community for over thirty years, raising our two sons, and enjoying the quality of life Citrus County has to offer, the library system is one of the services that we have used extensively. It has been an important part of my life in Citrus County both professionally and personally. Because of this connection, I felt it was important to give something back to an organization that has given so much to my family and me. And, I also always had a secret desire to run a book store; this is a way to fulfill that ambition as well! Finally and selfishly, volunteering at the library allows me to see many more books than I would have an opportunity to do by just dropping in. Now I often find new authors and books for myself and friends.

I consider it a privilege to work with the people within the library system, both regular employees and other volunteers. It just seems a natural fit - to work around books and people who love books.