

Copper Queen Library staff member acknowledged by 'Library Journal'

Shar Porier

June 15, 2021

sporier@myheraldreview.com



Copper Queen Library Program Coordinator Alison Williams stands in the library's children section last week. Williams recently received an award from the nationally known Library Journal's Movers and Shakers for 2021

Photo by Mark Levy, Herald/Review

BISBEE — Just two years ago, the Copper Queen Library was recognized as the Best Small Library in America by the Library Journal and now the library's program coordinator, Alison Williams, has been named as one of the publication's Movers and Shakers for 2021.

Williams began her career with the library five years ago and she could not be happier with her decision.

"I always wanted to work in a library all my life, but I got into publishing and was an art director," she said. "I was a patron when I first moved to Bisbee in 2003."

Her mom, Helen Saul, moved here after she fell in love with the old city and the bug bit New Yorker Williams, too, on a visit.

"I just fell in love with the town and the people and I just stayed," she said.

She found work with the Bisbee Radio Project's station KBRP which provided her with experience in grant writing and programming.

"It was interesting and a fun thing to do," she noted. "Then, when I saw the job opening at the library, I was thrilled and jumped at the opportunity."

At first, she was just part time, but as time went on her hours were increased as the patron base grew and partnerships developed, which provided more and more programs for children, teens, students and adults.

Working with the Bisbee Unified School District, the library carried the books to fit the curriculum. Soon after, she reached out to preschools, private schools and to homeschoolers to help promote literacy.

Thanks to support from the Friends of the Copper Queen Library, Freeport McMoRan Inc. Copper Queen Branch, generous individuals and numerous grants totaling around \$155,000 that Williams wrote, numerous programs were started and expanded to include the Preschool Story Hour every Friday morning, the Summer Reading Program in June and July, lectures, workshops and more.

But her biggest accomplishment, with the help of the staff, volunteers and the community, was the successful establishment of the annex library in San Jose at the BUSD administrative offices on Melody Lane to serve the children and adults there and in Naco.

Though the annex closed due to the pandemic, there is a plan to set up comfortable outdoor accommodations for children's programs later this summer also from a grant Williams wrote, she said. In the meantime, there are dance and health and wellness classes for adults offered on the patio behind the building. Soon, she hopes art classes for every age and every ability level in a number of mediums will begin.

"We created a number of community oriented programs," Williams said. "We have Wi-Fi hotspots for patrons to access the Internet. We have bocci balls for the courts in Warren at Vista Park and pickle ball rackets and balls for the courts in Higgins Park. We have automotive and garden tools patrons can check out. And, we started a seed library. We are all thinking outside the box."

None of the many programs and offerings of the library would not be possible without the guidance of Jason Macoviak, Copper Queen Library manager, who nominated her, she noted.

"While I am humble and honored by this acknowledgement, I share it with the staff and volunteers at the Copper Queen Library," she added.



Copper Queen Library Program Coordinator Alison Williams hosts the first story hour for toddlers in over a year last month. The library is trying to get the youth programs up and running again since COVID-19.

Photo by Mark Levy, Herald/Review

Alison Williams, program coordinator for the Copper Queen Library, sorts through books that will be mailed to area youngsters. The free books are part of the library's summer reading program instituted by Williams last year.

Photo by Mark Levy, Herald/Review

