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Children's Librarian Spotlight: Emma Carbone

Have you heard? Libraries are the coolest. You can borrow books and films for free. FOR FREE. It's an amazing resource for research and entertainment, and a wonderful way to get involved in your community. Today, we're excited to launch a brand new monthly feature on the blog where we hear from friendly librarians from all over the United States.

This month, we check in with Emma, who works right in Workman's own backyard: the [Central Youth Wing of Brooklyn Public Library](#). It's there that Emma works as a Young Adult Librarian, curates helpful book lists with her deep backlist knowledge, teaches kids how to crochet, and enjoys the Brooklyn Botanical Garden on her lunch break. In addition, she reviews new titles for *School Library Journal* and has been blogging for seven years about reading, poetry, and book events.

Find out why Emma doesn't mind loud voices in the library, the titles she is recommending the most, and an unexpected but sweet moment she recently participated in at work.

Happy reading!

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Tell us a little bit about your background as a librarian.

When I was sixteen, I started volunteering at my local and school libraries. Through college and grad school, I started working in libraries as a shelving page and worked as a part-time. Currently, I work at the Brooklyn Public Library in the Central Library's Youth Wing as a YA Librarian. I have a strong focus in Readers' Advisory both in-person and through my library's online book recommendation service, [BookMatch](#). I also chair my library's YA Books Showcase committee organizing presentations about new books and a Mock Printz program, so I'm always reading new books and looking for recommendations.



What books do you find yourself constantly recommending?

This is a hard one, but I'd say my top books to recommend to teens are *All These Things I've Done* by Gabrielle Zevin, *Dust Girl* by Sarah Zettel, and *The Fifth Wave* by Rick Yancey. For picture books, I'm a big fan of *Little Elliot*, *Big City* by Mike Curato, *The Watermelon Seed* by Greg Pizzoli, and almost anything by Ame Dyckman (especially *Wolfie the Bunny*, illustrated by Zachariah OHora).

What's the book with the longest waiting list?

Since we're in the middle of summer, teens are mostly picking up their assigned school reading, so *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie.

What are a few of your most adored books from your childhood?

The Mysteries of Harris Burdick by Chris Van Allsburg, *The View From Saturday* by E. L. Konigsburg, and *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare.

What is your favorite feature of your library?

I really like working in the Youth Wing, where I am part of a department filled with other youth services librarians. It's a bit of a luxury in a public library branch, where smaller branches often have only one children's librarian (and one YA librarian sometimes) among the other staff. It gives me a lot of opportunities to try new things—thanks to the level of support from a larger department.

My library also has a bear statue made by Edna Guck in 1936 (and dedicated to the library in 1941) as part of the Government Arts Project for the library. I love having a small statue/mascot; it's always a crowd pleaser with patrons. The bear was even painted by the library's artist-in-residence, Steve Keene, last summer.

What kinds of programs do you run? Which one you are most proud of?

I'm most proud of my Crochet Club—a monthly program where I teach tweens and teens how to crochet and help them make small projects. Some of the kids don't get it right away but I've had overwhelming enthusiasm about the program and excitement from the kids as they become more skilled and can make more complex things. There's also the Teen Makerspace program, where teens get free run of a variety of craft supplies that I've put together in ready-to-go craft kits. I've been particularly impressed when I hand out rolls of duct tape and let the teens run with it—making everything from bookmarks to wallets and bracelets.

What's one of the more memorable things you found in a returned library book?

My favorite find was a pastel pink metal bookmark in the shape of a 1950s convertible (complete with tail fins).

When people say libraries are going out of style, what do you tell them?

Libraries aren't going out of style so much as changing. The focus used to be on libraries providing information in the form of physical materials. Now, libraries are shifting to meet community needs by providing skills to find resources and to act as a space for community members.

What's the biggest misconception people have about librarians?

So many people think librarians are always quiet or unapproachable. I love talking to people and answering questions at the Information Desk and I always want young people to feel comfortable—even if that means they aren't always using their "inside" voice.

Name the most unexpected part of your job as a librarian.

As I mentioned before, people are often surprised to hear how much of my job is just talking to others. Chatting and building a rapport with tweens and teens is especially satisfying, as I like to think it helps them see the library as a place they can come to for support and to find a friendly face (me specifically!). Last



week, this led to a particularly adorable interaction where I helped play matchmaker between a new teen volunteer and one of our regular teen patrons. After much back and forth with me and another librarian, the volunteer successfully got the patron's number and they have a date planned! I'm hoping it's a success.

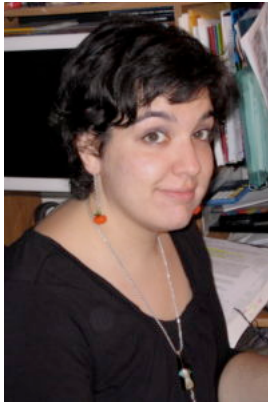
What's your biggest challenge as a librarian?

While all the interaction with patrons is wonderful and I've certainly gotten better at it over the years, it's sometimes difficult to be "on" for so much of the time and to remember that bad days, mine or a difficult patron's, should have nothing to do with interactions I have during my work day. As a YA librarian specifically, I also find it hard to remember that everything takes time and needs to be nurtured, whether it's building up the YA fiction collection, starting a new program from scratch, or getting to

know teen volunteers.

Describe your position in three words.

People, information, books, fun. (I do what I want, so I added a fourth word.)



Emma Carbone is a YA librarian, blogger, and aspiring author. She received her MLS from Pratt Institute in 2010 and has been working in libraries since she was sixteen. She served on the Young Adult Library Services Association's 2015 and 2016 Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults committees, and reviews books for *School Library Journal*. She has been talking books (and libraries) on her [blog](#) since 2007. She's also a big fan of Twitter, baking, and crafting.

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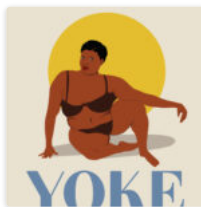
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