



**Nominee: Cherry Hamrick
Delta Township District Library
Lansing, Michigan**

Nominator: Jose Lopez

1. Please tell us in 2-3 sentences why your nominee should win this award.

I'm nominating fellow Rotarian Cherry Hamrick to the "I Love my Librarian Award." Four other library patrons collaborated in recognizing the accomplishments of our exceptional public librarian. Cherry has led the Delta Township District Library (DTDL) as Director for more than ten years. Fellow nominators Becky LeBoeuf and Rob Spagnuolo describe Cherry as having "a profound love for libraries" and being "very passionate about libraries, books, and the community" respectively.

Cherry works hard to make sure DTDL has a reputation for excellence. Diana Yager adds, "With the increasing popularity of downloadable ebooks and audio books, libraries are finding new roles in the community. Cherry is very forward thinking in this regard and has found innovative ways to get the community involved in our library." Mike Moore summarizes why she should win this award, "Due to her leadership the community has come to appreciate the high standards of creative imagination in programs, well- oriented professional knowledge, innovative ideas and high professional ethics of the library staff."

What set her apart and biggest accomplishment is that she was the driving force behind the design and construction a beautiful, patron-friendly new (opened in 2008) library building. It is a well-used, IT-ready community asset.

2. Please list a few ways in which the nominee has helped you and made your experience.

For this question, the input of each of the collaborators provide various examples of how Cherry has made and continues to make our experience of the library a positive one.

Mike Moore, Former DTDL Board President, speaks of time of the design and construction of the library building. He says, "Mrs. Hamrick was a leading force in the building of the new Delta Township District Library. She participated in this true community effort that involved the input of staff, architects, construction manager,

township officials, interior designer, staff, Library Board, Friends of the Library and influential community members to achieve this crown jewel in the community. The 30,000 square foot building includes a strong commitment to achieving Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification. It was the first public green building in Delta Township. Mrs. Hamrick was on the site daily during the construction phase.”

The employee’s point of view speaks of inspiration and encouragement and support. Becky LeBoeuf boldly declares, “As a staff member serving under Cherry, I have been inspired by her dedication to our library. I am the Youth Services Librarian at DTDL and Cherry is always very supportive of our youth department’s work, and she gives us the freedom to try new things. She strives to make the library a place that people want to come to learn, be entertained, gather, and spend their free time.”

Diana Yager, DTDL bookstore director (a volunteer position) and longtime library patron, relates that “Cherry has shared her own experiences with the community by presenting excellent travel logs showing her marathon runs in China and Antarctica as well as presented them to other organizations in the community.” She reveals a couple of Cherry’s decisions that boost the patrons’ experience of the library into a positive one. “To brighten a concrete block stair case to the lower level, she contributed a homemade quilt in the library colors as well as had a friend and long- time library patron contribute two more. Cherry is working closely with a local boy on his Eagle Scout project to build a ‘Little Lending Library’ along a three mile trail next to the library.” In its most basic form, a Little Free Library is little wood-and-glass hut stand on curbside, along a park trail or private front yard full of books where anyone, on the honor system, may stop by and pick up a book (or two) and bring back another book to share.

From the patron’s perspective, Rob Spagnuolo, current DTDL Board Member and DeWitt Public Schools administrator, exclaims, “This is a simple response, but has tremendous impact on me. Plain and simple I can tell that Cherry loves the Library! The way she speaks about it, the hours she commits to work, the programs she has approved, and her relationships all suggest and prove this. It is hard not to be inspired to attend a program, volunteer your time, and invest time in reading with my children after talking with Cherry!”

It is always amazing to see how much activity is going on in the Library. Those provide indirect ways Cherry helps patrons, makes their visit to the library a positive experience, and assists patrons in enhancing their frequent stops to the library. Diana Yager presents a sampling of the DTDL-sponsored activities. She states, “Cherry directed the organization of 338 youth programs and 258 adult programs that were attended by over 13,000 patrons. Other events included: cook offs, a monthly recipe club, a Battle of the Books contest, a Star Wars Program, a Dr. Who party, a Pete the Cat character visit, a library gnome summer trip, a fall concert series, a World War II Program featuring local veterans, a genealogy program and club as well as the usual weekly events.”

More than half of the collaborators to this nomination affirm that one of the most interesting aspects of Cherry's ability to inspire a love of literature is her customary signature at the end of each email she sends or replies to, no matter the recipient. It always concludes after her signature with "The book I am presently reading" and then lists the title of a book and "The book I am presently listening to" and then lists the title of a recorded book. Isn't that a great way to get folks to think about literature? It's always fun to get a librarian's perspective on a good book!

3. How has the librarian made a difference in the community? Please be specific.

When Cherry came to DTDL, she already had worked for 13 years as head librarian at Haslett Library. In the short eleven years Cherry Hamrick's administration in Delta Township, she has made a humongous difference in the community by providing multiple library services as well as representing DTDL throughout the community. In 2003, she took the DTDL job for two reasons; the wonderful and hard-working staff, and the chance to be deeply involved in building a new library. A little forgotten fact is that Cherry worked at the Delta Township Library 25 years ago, before becoming the Head Librarian at Haslett Library. Cherry received a Bachelor's Degree in English and Theater from MSU and in her late 40's, and, while working full-time, went to Wayne State for her Master's Degree in Library and Information Science.

"When first employed Cherry was given the task of making the library better known in the community," So declares former DTDL Board President, Mike Moore. "Delta Township used to have a 4800 square foot library building, housed in an old school. Every new item in the collection meant another had to be weeded and there was very little space for expanding services. Cherry helped oversee a successful millage campaign and the construction of a new 30,000 square foot building," added Becky LeBoeuf, youth services librarian at DTDL.

Cherry's role in fundraising for DTDL is an ongoing process. She participated in the planning and execution of an Annual Gala and Silent Auction to support a special collection of Women's biographies and autobiographies. "Cherry is also an experienced runner. Her two biggest passions are reading and running. She has done marathons in China, Antarctica, Detroit (twice), Bayshore, Big Sur and Chicago. In China some of the course ran along the great wall. What an experience! She has used this hobby/passion for running to coordinate 2 races each year," said Rob Spagnuolo. She organized an Annual Run for Reading each spring that has raised awareness within the community and had over 500 participants annually from the entire Midwest. This race had its 9th anniversary in 2014. In 2008 the Library was host to the first Jingle Belle Race, an innovative winter 5K run-walk exclusively for women. Along with the race, this event included a craft show at the Library two weeks before Christmas. DTDL's 6th annual Jingle Belle 5K Run/Walk for Women took place Saturday, December 14, 2013. Even given the severe Michigan cold weather last December, more than 260 women took part and brought many new patrons to the library. The races have become an annual event and have grown in attendance and financial contributions. The money raised goes towards funding

enhancements for the library such as new art work in the building and sculptures outside the building.

Alyssa Arseneau, a writer for the 'Capital Area Women's Lifestyle' magazine, wrote in the November 23, 2010 edition, "Along with 36 staff members, Hamrick creates a warm and welcoming community atmosphere in the library. 'A great thing about the DTDL is that it is open to anyone, not just residents of the community. I think it is so important that everyone gets the chance to read and participate in our events,' says Hamrick. The DTDL has a special room for women available that is full of donated pieces from Lissa K. McLean and is a great area to hold group meetings."

Cherry's interaction with the community serves various purposes. The races/walks, the active presence in business, governmental, and community groups, the used books store run by the Friends of the Library [A volunteer organization (1,000 members strong) dedicated to supporting the Delta Township District Library.] are some examples of interactions that generate some funds for the Library. "The community loves the new library and our services, programming, and collections have grown exponentially, as has our patronage," states Becky LeBoeuf.

To keep the library visible in the community, Cherry is involved with the Delta Waverly Rotary Club – a local service group with international ramification; the Delta Side Business Association – an organization for business owners in Delta Township that meets monthly at the Delta Township District Library; and Delta Government Relations Committee. She is a charter member of the Friends of the Lansing River Trail Board of Directors – comprising of approximately 13 miles of paved trail pass through numerous parks and natural areas throughout greater Lansing.

Again Mike Moore summarizes, "She has raised the community awareness of the Library to the highest level in history with the associated patron visits also at a record level. Due to her leadership the community has come to appreciate the high standards of creative imagination in programs, well- oriented professional knowledge, innovative ideas and high professional ethics of the library staff."

4. How has the library, and the nominee, improved the quality of your life?

I'm glad I asked several collaborators for their input. Each, like probably every patron, acknowledges that the quality of life of Delta Township has and continues to improve with the new library under Cherry direction. Delta Township District Library is a Public library. That means open to everyone. The collection of the new library contains 61,053 volumes. The new library circulates 340,003 items per year. The library serves a population of 32,408 residents. This is quite an improvement from the meager offerings prior to 2008.

"I absolutely love working at the Delta Township District Library. I get the chance to work with people, especially kids and teens, in a warm, welcoming environment, and I feel my work is always supported by Cherry," affirms Becky LeBoeuf.

Rob Spagnuolo adds, "Libraries are an essential part of a community. Our old library was not sufficient given the growth in Delta Township and the demands of our community. Cherry recognized this and worked diligently to get our new library built. It has become a pillar in our community and a place that has a lot of activity. This desire to bring community together has greatly improved my quality of life and of those around me."

"The quality of life for citizens of Delta Township has been substantially improved due to Mrs. Hamrick's tenure as Director of the Delta Township District Library. I often visit the library and am amazed at the diversity of patrons...young and old, racially diverse, those visiting for recreational reading and those who research school assignments or are studying for promotional exams, and job seekers utilizing the many public computers. Through her leadership she has improved the quality of life of all library patrons,"

"She has encouraged not only reading but participation in many other library programs which has made learning much more enjoyable," says Diana Yager. She continues, "Especially valuable to me were the computer classes which encouraged me to expand my computer literacy."

Cherry is always looking for ways to increase participation not only in circulation, but also in programming. It is always amazing to see how much activity is going on in the Library! She is a resource to local media. Media seek her expertise and quotes on book related matters. Those articles are proof that she is improving the community's quality of life. Here is an example.

In a September 24, 2003 article on banned books published in the newspaper City Pulse, the writer quotes Hamrick, "For instance, when a new Harry Potter is published, "somebody wants to talk to me about whether it's appropriate," Hamrick said. She responds by doing "the standard librarian thing. I say, 'Parents need to be the monitors, and not librarians. Talk with your child.'"

Personally the new library improves my quality of life each time I visit. I'm the family genealogist. The library offers me and other patrons various resources and sources of information essential to the enhancement of my family tree. Besides subscribing to the Ancestry Library Edition, DTDL holds monthly workshops where other amateur genealogists can share their researching knowledge among each other. I continue to discover valuable facts and the supporting documentation about the members of my family tree.

5. How does the nominee make the library a better place?

Cherry's exceptional leadership backed by years of expertise in all aspects of library services, drive Mike Moore to say, "There is no greater representation of a library providing superior customer service that I know of than the Delta Township District Library under the leadership of Mrs. Cherry Hamrick."

Cherry draws from her hobbies and passions to do many things that make the library a better place. She is a runner, walker, and kayaker. From her active life style she brings to

the library a well-organized and energetic leader. To this Rob Spagnuolo asserts “Specifically, she has continued to increase programs, has helped to grow the summer reading program, and has kept the Library visible through her races and involvement in community organizations.”

She and her husband have two grown children. From her family life, the library benefits by having a caring and dedicated director who has made the new library a very inspiring, fully accessible, totally inclusive, and much more welcoming place to be. This is affirmed by Mike Moore when he says, “Mrs. Hamrick’s strong leadership, innovative administration, and commitment to excellence have made the Library a better place and this community a better place to live.”

She is well-educated in library sciences and has accumulated close to twenty five years of ‘on-the-trenches’ experience. This dynamic combination gives her, almost second nature, the ability to create the synergy needed among staff, patrons, board of director’s members and community leaders to effectively make the library a better place. “Cherry is always making sure the library building itself is clean, organized, welcoming, and functioning at its highest level. She encourages staff to try new ideas, services, and programs and she is supportive of professional development for staff. She is out in the community spreading the word about the library and making connections,” adds Becky LeBoeuf.

She is a visionary. Diana Yager says, “In addition to all the programs, Cherry has been instrumental in keeping our five year old library in “like new” condition. She shows exceptional pride in the appearance of the grounds, the building exterior as well as the interior. She has worked closely with the art committee she formed of patrons interested in beautifying the library and helped raise funds to purchase art for several rooms plus two exterior metal sculptures.”

In summary, it seems like all the stars have lined up at this particular time and in this particular place for our community to reap the benefits of Cherry Hamrick’s leadership. The new library, through her guidance and vision, is functioning as a community center where many of the Delta Township residents and some non-residents enrich their lives through a variety of activities. All of the library’s meeting, conference, and gathering spaces are available free of charge to any non-profit or individual. This new library is meeting the needs of the communities it serves, better than at the previous space. It takes an awesome person with a very effective and efficient staff to spearhead and coordinate the multiple activities offered at Delta Township District Library. Delta Township is honored and proud to have such a valuable asset running our library. This confident, caring and compassionate library director deserves this honor and recognition.

<http://www.dtdl.org/about-us/building/>