

# Library's new director has lengthy 'to-do' list

When Jane Diamanti assumed the position of Director of Libraries for Halton Hills Public Library (HHPL) in September, she said it was a "dream come true."

"I can honestly say this has been my dream," said Diamanti last week, "I've always wanted to be a CEO (Chief Executive Officer) in an urban and rural setting library and to be able to have an influence on the community."

In retrospect, it would seem Diamanti has been unconsciously preparing herself for the Halton Hills job, as she has worked in virtually every aspect of the library systems across Canada since she began her career in Owen Sound years ago.

Starting as a children's librarian there, she later moved to Orillia, working in info services, then on to become readers' advisor in Whitby, as well as co-ordinating services to the homebound and elderly.

After a position as a branch head in Vaughan, she moved to Oakville Public Library, where she was head of circulation and community services for 10 years.

From there she moved to Kelowna B.C., and had the task of managing 29 branches over a 26,000 sq. km. area.

"I spent the majority of my time on the road," she said, "My area extended from the Rocky Mountains at the Alberta border to the U.S. border. It was quite a job."

During her time in Oakville, she said she also had the opportunity to experience former HHPL CEO Betsy Cornwell's style of managing, so when she arrived here, she was well acquainted with Halton Hills' needs and challenges.

"It might be considered a bit intimidating to take over from someone like Betsy



JANE DIAMANTI

(Cornwell) who spent 28 years here," she said, "But I'm not a 'Betsy Cornwell'. I have my own style and I like to take it slow and acknowledge the people here so they can get used to my way of managing."

Describing herself as "a catalyst for change," Diamanti is quick to add she doesn't endorse change for the sake of change, but would rather take time to assess the needs of the community and

work toward making the facilities meet those needs.

"I'm comfortable with change, but I want to be sure to make the moves count," she continued, "And not only do I want to see the needs of Halton Hills Public Libraries' customers met, but I believe it's very important to maintain high staff morale here as well."

"Little things can make such a difference on staff morale," she added, "Just improving furniture and equipment makes a difference. Harmony is very important here, and we operate like a big happy family."

Diamanti outlined a number of her objectives to be met in the not too distant future, and first on her list is to engage the library board, staff and customers to develop a strategic plan for the library.

Another objective Diamanti feels is important is to involve all her staff in a review of the existing services at HHPL, to expand the services to the public's specific needs, and bring attention to services the public may not know even exist.

Diamanti has plans to maximize the space at the Georgetown branch by purchasing steel shelving and updating the displays so they can better meet today's needs. The original wooden shelving is limiting due to its fixed shelving heights, so she feels utilizing the more versatile steel shelves will increase the floor space by 20 per cent, while freeing up space to better market the libraries' programs and services.

In addition, she would like to rearrange the facility to develop areas for young adults so they will be more inclined to use the library for research and study, as well as recreational reading.

As far as the Acton branch goes, Diamanti is determined to lobby for a more accessible facility. She will collect customers' comments about accessibility issues at that branch, and prepare a report to forward to the town's Accessibility Committee, especially in the areas of handicap access, and stroller access for parents of toddlers.

Diamanti wants to also prepare for a new Georgetown facility in the not-too-distant future, putting together a building committee to represent both the membership and residents, so they are in position when the time comes.

As far as the book collection goes, Diamanti wants to further involve staff in reading programs, and encourage them to be a valuable resource to library customers who come in looking for information on authors or subjects.

Diamanti also wants to build up the Friends of the Library membership, and encourage them to become more active in specific areas, including fund-raising.

She'd love to see authors' readings held at the library and to possibly develop reading clubs for youths.

Continuing with the current practice of scanning and indexing newspapers is important, and Diamanti hopes to further enhance the information services with increased access to local historical information.

"I think it's very important for a library to be strongly connected to its community," said Diamanti, "And to do so, we must promote the facility as a place that people are comfortable visiting, while they pursue their information or simply enjoy leisurely reading."

—By Ted Brown, staff writer

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