

Teacher-Librarian Donna E. Berzaitis

– even though the library staff controls discipline for all of its patrons, any problems associated with our students are brought to our attention the next day. These students are dealt with by administration and myself.

Involving the students

In order to help maintain a quiet working environment in the library and Main Street (the corridor which physically separates the school from the library and swimming pool), especially after school, Mary Anne, myself, and a representative from the community centre, trained some grade 10 student volunteers to be prefects. Since we only had grades 9 and 10 to draw from, we naturally tapped into the grade 10 student population. The library purchased some City of Mississauga thermals, to be worn as a uniform by these volunteers. Not only were the prefects to promote an atmosphere free of inappropriate noise levels, they were to discourage groups of students from congregating en masse in the Main Street area and library. Their shifts were very short, from 2:20 to 4:00 p.m. Using the prefects has not been a 100% success, but at least it has made the student population more aware of library rules. We chose to put off prefects this year; we will wait until we have a grade 12 population to draw from.

For this year, we are addressing and reinforcing library rules in a fun, informational video. I approached the communications and technology teacher with a request that his students create a video illustrating library rules. The school produces a show called “G-Force” which is aired three times a week in the morning. The anthem, chaplain’s corner, sports news are telecast by these students. They write, record, produce and perform

the show. Of course, it helps that each Gonzaga classroom is outfitted with a TV/VCR. I sat down with a small group of students and explained how I wanted to stress the rules in a humorous, but meaningful manner. Mary Anne supported this video project and handled the permit work. The completed piece was received enthusiastically by students and staff. We are hoping to produce a sequel .

Operating the resource centre

Teachers at Gonzaga book a research period at the library through me. As you might expect we discuss topics the students will be researching and then I identify resources before the students visit. I usually get a couple days of lead-time, sometimes more, to prepare for the teacher’s expectations.

Not only do the students have complete access to the print materials on hand in Erin Meadows, but we also have a computer lab with a bank of 22 computers in a 2,000 square foot space which includes my office that has a phone connected to the school and a second phone which is connected to the library. This computer lab is exclusively for Gonzaga students from 8 am to 3 pm weekdays. Because our students are also public patrons, they have access to these computers after school, only they have to sign up for computer use. This computer lab has been somewhat personalized: we have Gonzaga mousepads, our bulletin boards sport Gonzaga course calendars and other news, but the public benefits too because there is information for them on the inquiry and research process.

What has been a huge gift to the Gonzaga community are the electronic databases that we can freely use because the Mississauga

Library System subscribes to them. The number of licenses they have far exceeds what a regular high school library could afford. For instance, the list boasts CBCA, CPI.Q, Canadian News Disc, CanCorp Financials, E-Stat 2001 Edition, Electric Library, Equity Portraits, FIS online, FP Dividends, Gale Health & Wellness Resource Centre, Gale Literature Resource Centre, Pages of the Past, Sirs Researcher Online, Virtual News Library, and Gale What Do I Read Next? Online.

If we ever experience any computer problems in the student lab area, I call the City Help Desk and before the end of the school day, my call is returned by an Information Technology Specialist who talks directly to me about the problem. Almost always, IT dispatches a person to come and fix the problem that same day. This expedient and expert service cannot compare with a regular high school library. Once again, the benefits to this partnership are made loud and clear.

Working with the public side

In the summer of 2002, several

