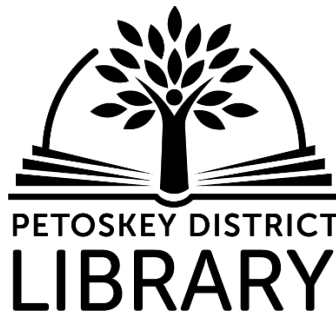




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PDL Librarian Nisa Kessler Recognized for Excellence in Service to Youth

Nisa Kessler, teen services librarian at Petoskey District Library, was presented with the Frances H. Pletz Award for Excellence in Service to Youth during the Michigan Library Association's annual awards ceremony on Wednesday evening.

The annual Pletz Award recognizes a Michigan library staff person who has shown outstanding contributions throughout their career to the field of library service for youth ages 0-18. Kessler was nominated by Megan Goedge, children's librarian and youth services department head at Petoskey District Library (PDL). The two have been working together at PDL since 2016.

In her nomination letter, Goedge lauded Kessler for her efforts in developing teen programs, her outreach at the local schools, her collaboration with teachers, and for her focus on creating a dedicated teen space in the library.

"Possibly most importantly," Goedge stated in the letter about Kessler, "she makes all of the teens feel welcome and valued in the library, especially marginalized teens. The teen area has blossomed into something beautiful as a safe space for teens all because of Nisa's giant heart and immense understanding of and rapport with that age group."

Accompanying Goedge's nomination letter were glowing letters of support from Petoskey High School teachers Samantha Fettig (Special Education) and Lynne Lesky (English), as well as PDL's teen assistant librarian Nikki Russell and library director Val Meyerson.

"Nisa has proven to be exemplary in creating enriching and fun activities tailored for teenagers, from interactive films and trivia nights to 'Life Hacks' workshops on voting, time management, and healthy eating," stated Meyerson in her letter of support. "Nisa's unwavering commitment to inclusivity is commendable. By developing programs that embrace diversity and encourage dialogue on important social issues, Nisa has created an environment where all teens feel welcome and valued. Her emphasis on promoting tolerance, empathy, and understanding through her Teen Advisory Board is crucial in shaping the lives of some of our kids."

Both Goedge and Meyerson attended the MLA event with Kessler, with Goedge having the honor of introducing and presenting her coworker and friend with the award.

"I'm excited that this person gets to be honored with this award," said Goedge. "She understands that teens matter, that libraries matter and that teens when in libraries matter. I'm proud to say that we're on a team together."

Though Kessler learned she had earned the award some weeks ago, she was still feeling overwhelmed by the recognition when presented with the trophy on stage Wednesday.

"I could hardly believe it when I got the email. I was gobsmacked," Kessler said in beginning her remarks on stage. After acknowledging and thanking Goedge, Meyerson, her library coworkers and her family for their support over the years, Kessler ended by commenting on what motivates her.

"Finally, I want to say something about teens," Kessler said. "I had a person ask me 'Why do you work with teens?' and the simple answer is, I like them. I really like teenagers. They are fun. They are wild. They are all over the place emotionally. And I love being there with them every single day. I love hearing their stories. I love it when they come to study. I even love the one that comes with a skateboard and tries to get away with that in the library, which he doesn't get away with. So just want to say, I love the teens and they're why I do this and I'm so grateful for this award."

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