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Seeing the School Library from Pre-Service Students' Perspectives

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Think back to your first years as a school librarian. What thoughts, feelings, and fears did you have? What were you most excited about? Do you remember how you planned to change the world, one book and one student at a time?

In this issue of *Knowledge Quest* we have an opportunity to look through the window and see the view from the perspectives of school library students. You will find their views are quite varied, but some common threads run throughout. You will read about partnerships: between school and public librarians, between classroom teachers and librarians, even between students and e-books. You will also read about what happens when new school librarians are confronted with the reality of daily life within a school library. Most of all, you will read about the wonderful, exciting community of school librarianship by seeing it through the eyes of its newest members.

All of us have opportunities to mentor, encourage, and set the example for new librarians, and these articles will provide ideas of how you might work with a student or someone new in the field. One of the best things about our profession is the comradery and collaboration among us. I have never been to a library conference or meeting where ideas were not shared nor resources exchanged. The excitement generated by a room full of librarians is contagious and lasts far beyond the conference. We become better as we share our experiences with others and make someone else's ideas work in our space.

School library students enter the profession knowing the ideal of a school library, and they might be hit hard with reality when they start their first job. It can be isolating to be the only person in the school who knows what's involved with leading an effective school library program. New librarians need to know that beyond their schools' walls they can find support

and someone to talk to about their successes and struggles. They need to feel like they are now part of this great collaborative community. We can all encourage pre-service and new librarians we meet to join AASL and their state affiliates to take advantage of face-to-face and virtual opportunities to share and grow with other school librarians.

This issue of *Knowledge Quest* includes the voices of students in library programs from around the country. Their stories are varied, and each has had unique experiences, but their collective excitement about entering the profession is clear. They speak of the need to be supported and mentored by experienced professionals as they are learning the ins and outs of being school librarians. They offer new ideas, new research, and new perspectives.

As you read their stories, think about how you can make a difference in the experience of a new librarian. These enthusiastic young librarians are ready to go to bat for the profession and for the pressing need to maintain and grow the presence of school libraries.

I hope you enjoy reading their stories and learn from them. I know I have!

Karla Collins is an assistant professor at Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia. A member of AASL, she serves on the Knowledge Quest Editorial Board and chairs the Educators of School Librarians Section. She also serves on the Association of American University Presses Book Selection Committee. Among her recent publications is "Reaching All Learners in the School Library," which appeared in the May 2016 issue of *School Library Connection*.