



Your School's Library Should Be the Heart of Your School's Community

By Educator Barnes – April 8, 2019

This school year is my 13th as an educator but my first school year as a library/media specialist. It has been a whirlwind but a whirlwind full of fun. I quickly learned that a school library is an

important part of the school. This is why we need to draw attention to libraries in our communities and libraries in our schools.

Last week was a good opportunity to focus on school libraries. April 4th was National School Librarian Day. My school was still on spring break last week, so I was not able to celebrate this day with my students. Instead, I was able to celebrate this day with my twin sons in their second-grade class. One of my sons is a published author. He wrote the nonfiction book *My Family's Trip to the Smoky Mountains* which is based on our spring break trip last year. After he read his book to his class, I had the opportunity to speak to his class about the process it takes to create a book. I was filled with joy because of all the wonderful questions the students asked. Librarians are more than keepers of books; we help people find resources and answers to questions they have.

To keep the momentum going, this week is National Library Week, and the theme is Libraries = Strong Communities. The American Library Association explains:

National Library Week is an annual celebration highlighting the valuable role libraries, librarians, and library workers play in transforming lives and strengthening our communities.

This year's theme, Libraries = Strong Communities, illustrates how today's libraries are at the heart of our cities, towns, schools and campuses, providing critical resources, programs and expertise. They also provide a public space where all community members, regardless of age, culture or income level, can come together to connect and learn.

This is why I am adamant that communities push back and ensure libraries are not closing especially in our schools and especially in schools where students are mostly of color or poor and already lack resources. A school library is a resource. In my library teachers collaborate, students work one-on-one or in a school group with an adult, and clubs gather after school. It is a safe space and a needed place.

If you know a librarian, thank him or her for helping people connect to resources and for providing a safe place to gather. Better yet, stop by your local school to see how you could support that school's library. Remember, any support helps.