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## The Germantown Community Library:



A Place to Learn, Share and Grow



# The Germantown Community Library: A Place to Learn, Share and Grow

By Trisha Smith & Heather Dorsey



*We love connecting people to information and finding ways to offer new things to the community.*



**For Trisha Smith**, director of the Germantown Community Library, her career is not just about her love of libraries and reading. It's actually her commitment to serving others that encouraged her to choose a career as a librarian.

Trisha grew up working in libraries: "I started working at the Germantown library in 2004, as a page, when I was in high school," Trisha says. "I had always loved reading and spending time at the library as a child and it was the perfect place for me to work."

After graduating from Germantown High School, Trisha attended the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater where she received her bachelor's degree in music. During that time, she worked as a student assistant at the university library and spent the summers working as an intern at the public library in Whitewater—the Irvin L. Young Memorial Library.

As she spent more and more time working in libraries, she began to realize that she wanted to make her work in libraries her career. In the fall of 2012, she took a full-time position in the circulation department at the university library in Whitewater and began taking graduate courses through the library and information studies library science program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

She was hired as the director of the Lomira Quad/Graphics Community Library in Lomira a few years later and in the summer of 2015, she completed an internship at the Germantown Community Library as part of her schooling course requirements. Shortly after, a librarian position opened up in the adult services department. She loved her work as a library director, but was very grateful to be able to return to Germantown where she was raised and where her love of libraries started.

“When Roberta Olson retired in July of 2016, I served as the interim director and was then hired as the director in October,” Trisha says. “The last year has been an amazing opportunity for me and has allowed me to work with a great staff and serve in a wonderful community.”

Trisha and her husband, DJ, live in Waukesha with their two children, Isabelle (2) and Daniel, born in February of this year.

Growing up, Trisha was very involved in the Germantown community. Her family moved to Germantown when she was five in 1993. She was in the Germantown High School Marching Band in High School, the National Honor Society, and the youth group at St. Boniface.

“My parents and family still live in the area and we still spend a lot of time in Germantown,” Trisha says. “We love attending the community festivals and Germantown Community Band concerts at Firemen’s Park during the summer.

“I also have taken both of my children to some of the Germantown Park & Rec programs. They both love Miss Julie’s music class!”

“What I enjoy most about coming to the library everyday is working with people in the community. I love that every day is different and that I am given the opportunity to connect patrons with information and services that they need,” Trisha says. “I am constantly learning from my patrons and working to share the services that we offer to others. I consider every patron that walks in the door to be essential to the library and want them to walk away having had a good experience.”

The Germantown Community Library, which moved to its current location in 2002, has evolved a lot since it first opened in 1963 as the Duerrwaechter Memorial Library, funded by a generous donation from Emma Duerrwaechter.

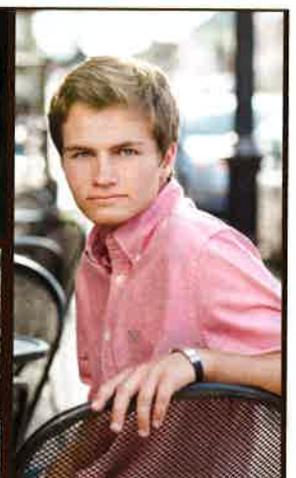
Even though books are still an important part of their services, obviously, they now check out DVDs, CDs, audio books, playaways, and magazines. The library subscribes to a variety of databases as well as Overdrive, a service that allows patrons to checkout electronic books and audio books; and Zinio, where patrons can check out digital magazines. All of these services are available for free with a Germantown library card.

The library provides study rooms and a large community room for community use for programs and a meeting space for the village and organizations in the community. The reference desk



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provides reader's advisory; information access and reference services; computer and Internet access and technology help. There is also a children's reference desk that specializes in children's reference services. Patrons can also print, scan, and fax for an additional cost.

"The philosophy of the Germantown Community Library is to serve citizen of all ages and interest levels in the community. We aim to provide the highest level of customer service and are dedicated to providing equal access to all patrons," Trisha says. "The library's goal is to allow users access to item in our collection, as well as services and programs. We aspire to be a focal point in the community and connect with the Village of Germantown and local businesses."

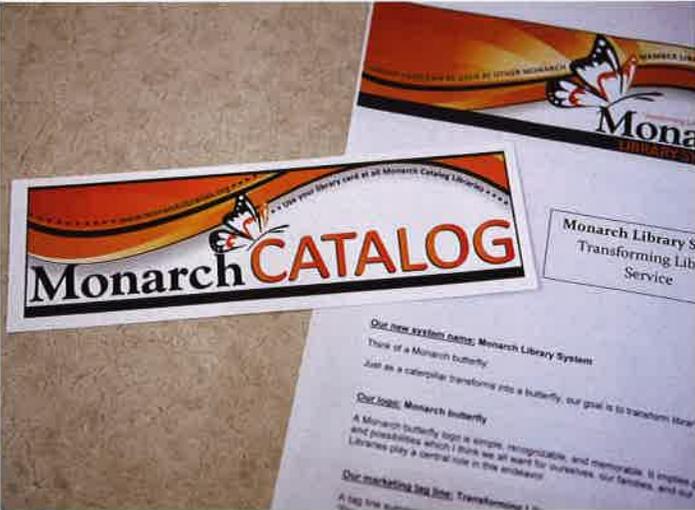
Programs are also a big part of the library's services to the community. Weekly storytime for babies and toddlers, as well as preschoolers, are offered several sessions a year. Their "Read to Rover" program allows elementary school students to practice reading to trained service dogs.

"We have an excellent children's and young adult summer reading program," Trisha says. "Children birth through sixth grade can sign up and receive free books and prizes for reading ten or more books over the summer. The young adult program is available for students in seventh grade and up. For each book read, students can enter a drawing to win gift certificates and prizes from local businesses."

The library also brings in a variety of different performers each summer. Groups that will be performing this summer include musicians, a traveling snake show, a comedy magician, and a circus dog. (Check the library website at [www.germantownlibrarywi.org](http://www.germantownlibrarywi.org) for details.)

New this year: a summer reading program for adults where each book participants read earns an entry into a drawing for free gift certificates, books, and other prizes.

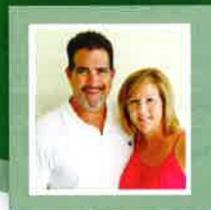
The library also offers six different monthly books groups for adults. The groups offer a range of interest levels including a mix of general fiction and nonfiction titles, history, nonfiction, mystery, and titles under 200 pages. Free coffee, tea, and hot chocolate are provided at meetings due to a generous donation from their Friends of the Library group. New adult programming also includes a needlecraft circle and gaming days.



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With everything going on it sounds like working at the library is all fun and games, but the library staff has a lot of pressure to continue to offer more and more programs and services with limited funds, resourcing and staffing. Trisha and her staff of five full-time employees (herself included), ten part-time employees and five to seven pages, depending on the time of year, are constantly trying to find ways to be creative with staffing and funding to make everything work.

They also depend on wonderful volunteers who complete tasks such as typing labels, cleaning DVDs and shifting books. The Friends of the Library group also raises money to fund many of the summer reading program performances and to purchase additional shelving and technology items such as computers and barcode scanners. They raise money through a holiday book and basket sale in December and a book sale in March. Funds are also raised through individual donations and the Amazon Smile program. (If you're not familiar with it, ask next time you are at the library.)

Local businesses have generously donated funds to support programming as well.

State Farm will be sponsoring their end of the year summer reading program party, Ross Stores donated funds for their summer reading program book prizes, and they received a donation from Momentum Early Learning. They are also working with the Germantown Mom's group using their generous donation to update early literacy services and toys in the children's area.

The library also works with other libraries to pool resources. It joined the Monarch Library System along with libraries in Washington, Dodge, Ozaukee, and Sheboygan counties in December. Patrons can request books from any library in the system and have it sent to Germantown at no cost. Items usually arrive in a few days if there is no one else waiting for them. This has expanded the library's catalog to over 1.1 million items and offered additional services for patrons and staff.

The Germantown Community Library recently launched a new website and facebook page and their goal is to get the word out to community members about all that the library has to offer.

"The library is currently in the process of trying to offer additional programs and services to the public," Trisha says. "We love connecting people to information and finding ways to offer new things to the community."



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