

Waterville Librarian Chosen out of a thousand

Patrons nominate Sarah Sugden for national honor

Sarah Sugden is one of 10 out of 1,000 nominees, to win the award sponsored by the Carnegie Corp. and The New York Times.

MORNING SENTINEL CENTRALMAINE.COM WEDNESDAY, DEC. 3, 2014

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WATERVILLE — Sarah Sugden grew up in Waterville, loving the Waterville Public Library. She worked there as a teenager, and after working at libraries from Arizona to Massachusetts, she came home to Waterville, becoming the library's director in 2005. Now the library's patrons and community leaders have shown her they love her back.

A new business and career center, renovations of the library building and an always positive and welcoming attitude are just some of the things Waterville residents and officials cited in nominating Sugden for a national award recognizing librarians who have made an impact in their communities.



On Tuesday, Sugden was in New York City to be recognized as one of 10 finalists to receive the I Love My Librarian Award, sponsored by the Carnegie Corp. of New York and The New York Times.

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To read the nomination that won Waterville librarian Sarah Sugden a 2014 I Love My Librarian award, go to www.ilovelibraries.org and click on “I Love My Librarian Award,” then on “Meet the 2014 Winners.” More than 1,000 librarians around the country were nominated, according to the Carnegie Corp. and the American Library Association.

“Because of Sarah, the whole community has fallen in love with the library,” said Tina Chapman, development and communications director at Kennebec Valley Behavioral Health in Waterville. “It has become a hub of activity, education and service and creativity in the community. And it’s because of Sarah that the whole community has become excited about the library.” Chapman and about a dozen other community members nominated Sugden, who has been the library’s director since 2005, for the award, and Chapman wrote the nomination.

“I am so tremendously grateful for this honor,” said Sugden, who spoke Tuesday night from The New York Times building in Manhattan, the site of the awards ceremony. “It is my heart’s delight to work in my beloved hometown at my very favorite library and with an extraordinary team of colleagues, trustees, volunteers and community partners.

“I am so grateful to the people of Waterville who work with us to make the Waterville Public Library the library our community deserves,” she said.

Sugden, 40, grew up in Waterville and volunteered at the library as a high



Lee Folsom, head of Adult Services and Circulation, foreground, Caite Carson-Gabriel, back left, Resource Development Coordinator, and Tammy Rabideau, back right, Business and Career Center Coordinator, pose for a portrait in the stairwell at the Waterville Public Library on Tuesday. *Staff photo by Michael G. Seamans*



Patrons of the Waterville Public Library gather to nominate the library’s director, Sarah Sugden, for a national I Love My Librarian Award, which recognizes librarians who have made a significant impact in their communities. Those who added to the nomination are, from left, Eve Sotiriou, Jennifer Olsen, Michele Prince, Tina Chapman, Mike Trombly and Dana Hamilton. *Staff photo by Rachel Ohm*

school student before graduating from Waterville Senior High School and attending Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, where she studied history. Sugden worked at a library in Phoenix, Ariz., then in Cambridge, Mass., before her return to Waterville. While

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She enjoyed working at the library as a teen, she said she hadn't considered a career in library science until she was almost through with college.

"In my senior spring, my dad said to me, 'What are you going to do with your history degree, Sarah?' and a colleague suggested to me that you could actually go to graduate

school and get a graduate degree in library science, so that's she's done fabulous things for the library, so that's what I did and it was the best thing I've done," she said.

"She's a charm. She's a jewel in Waterville and said Lee Folsom, the library's head of adult services and circulation. She said she remembers

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PRAISING SARAH



CHAPMAN

"Sarah is a superstar who espouses the joy of the Waterville Library in such a quirky and charming way – her enthusiasm is contagious. She is filled with amusing anecdotes about her family, the library, and the City of Waterville, all of which are incredibly near and dear to her heart. She's a comedian and an ambassador; a sweet, genuine intelligent person who lives and breathes books, words, information and learning. She has impelled an entire community to fall in love with both her and the Waterville Public Library."

*Tina Chapman, Development and Communications
Director at Kennebec Valley Behavioral Health in Waterville.*



LINDLOF

"Sarah has turned our sleepy ole library into a dynamic, updated community gathering spot, where people go to learn, stimulate their children with various activities around literacy. *Kimberly Lindlof, President/CEO of the Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce.*



"Sarah is a shining bright light within the Waterville Community. The Waterville Library patrons consider of a wonderful, diverse group of people that Sarah welcomes each day and greets us all as family. Her warmth and caring is sincere and makes everyone at the library feel like part of her family." *Library patron Eve A. Sotirou, of Greenwood Street, Waterville.*

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Sugden as a high school student. When the library's previous director retired in 2005, everyone was thrilled to learn that she would take over "At that point she was in Cambridge, and we asked if she wanted to come back to Maine. The rest is pretty much history," Folsom said. "Waterville is truly lucky to have her."

She also was president of the Waterville Rotary from 2009 to 2010. Chapman, who said she knows Sugden through work and the Rotary, said that when she heard about the I Love My Librarian Award, it seemed natural for the community to nominate Sugden.

"I come across a lot of grant and award applications through my work, and when I saw this one in my email, I just said, 'We have to do this because Sarah is so deserving and it would epitomize how the community feels about her,'" Chapman said. "It was so easy to get people to say 'Oh my gosh, yes, I want to say how much I love Sarah.'"

Chapman wrote the application, but the library also helped her get in touch with patrons and people in the community who work with Sugden to write the nomination, which Sugden said was a surprise.

"I'm a reader and I have a great respect for libraries, but the Waterville library is like no other library I've ever been in," said Dana Hamilton, employment services coordinator at Kennebec Valley Community Action Program.

her entire staff and everyone that comes into the library with a great respect, and that carries forward to everyone that comes in the building."

"She is a shining light," said Eve Sotiriou, a Waterville resident who said she started coming to the library a few years ago with her son. "Sarah just makes everyone feel accepted the moment they walk in."

Sugden, who is married and has two children, said she is eager to continue working to help the community through the library.

"All of us at the library are eager to work with our community partners and with the city to try and make all things happen," she said. "We are determined to try and help as many people as we can."

*This article by Rachel Ohm first appeared on Page 1 of the Morning Sentinel, a Central Maine Newspaper, on December 3, 2014. It also appeared online at www.CentralMaine.com, and is reprinted with permission. Contact information: Rachel Ohm — 612-2368 roh@centralmaine.com.
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