



NEW DIRECTOR FOR THE LIBRARY

Mary Jo Torgeson joins Anchorage Public Library team



Mary Jo Torgeson has worked in libraries since she was 17. She began her professional career as a Branch Coordinator in Sheridan, Wyoming. Over the last 20 years, she has managed and directed library services in both small and large public libraries.

Much of her experience has been in an urban library setting in Washington State, first at the King County Library System, and later, at the Seattle Public Library.

Her most recent position was as Library Director at a medium-sized public library in Puyallup, Washington. The new Anchorage Public Library Director earned her Masters of Library Science at the University of Washington and her Masters of Public Administration at Seattle University.

Torgeson believes passionately that libraries are an essential part of a vibrant and cohesive community. She looks forward to developing strong partnerships with Anchorage business, schools and community agencies, and to growing services at Anchorage Public Library that transform lives and foster learning for local residents, no matter what their age.

PRIORITIES

Torgeson's priorities include:

1. Continue the momentum of the Facility Master Plan by redesigning Loussac Library, to make it more adaptable for contemporary and future library services.
2. Increase the funding to Anchorage's public libraries through innovative partnerships that include additional government funding and philanthropic giving.
3. Evaluate and streamline workflow so that staff can accommodate a growing workload.
4. Determine where additional services and staff are needed in the community, whether it be additional buildings, library kiosks dispensing books and DVDs, or partnerships with other agencies.

PRIORITIES CONTINUED

5. Utilize adaptable technology to allow the library to be more responsive to the community.
6. Make the library the central access point in the community for books and other information. Have staff available to make suggestions, whether it is on the web or in the library.
7. Create a vibrant community-gathering place in our libraries. Libraries need to be compelling places that foster dialogue, and encourage people to think and learn new things.
8. Early literacy is vital, not only to individuals, but to our community as a whole. The library's role of encouraging parents to read to their children and teaching them how to build early literacy skills has a positive, lifelong impact.
9. Expand services to meet the diverse needs in our community, which include materials in other languages and programs that celebrate all of our differences.

VALUES

Mary Jo Torgeson's library values include:

- **Collaboration:** Community partners help provide joint programs and sponsorships.
- **Customer service:** Providing what customers want in an outgoing and friendly manner. A library where we say "yes" more often than "no."
- **Intellectual freedom:** Customers have the right to privacy and to read, view or listen to what they want.
- **Building community:** Libraries create connections and help to build a stronger community.
- **Supporting staff:** Creating an environment where staff can grow, can learn, can take risks and become leaders, and where input is heard and acted upon.

PERSONAL

On a personal note, Torgeson is looking forward to taking advantage of Alaska's wild open spaces and big skies. She kayaks and hikes, and plans to become an Alaskan gardener and beekeeper.

To contact Mary Jo Torgeson, email: torgesonmj@muni.org