



Northeast Area

Mary Melaugh

M.S.L.A. [Massachusetts Super Librarian Accolade]

School Librarian at Marshall Middle School in Billerica

Read Mary's Blog: <http://mmslibrary.teachers.billerica.k12.ma.us>

Since leaving the business world seven years ago, I have been stunned by the degree of disconnect between the results expected of educators and the resources provided. In business, if something is to be accomplished, resources are provided to help accomplish the task. In education, the resources provided seldom match the results expected. A mandate is made and the result is expected to simply appear, presumably provided out of the hearts, souls, and sheer will power of educators. Instead of resources, bonuses, prize vacation trips, and outrageous salaries, we receive treasures from our students and colleagues. Here are a few gems from my treasure chest:

★ Witnessing a sixth grade girl skipping down the hall with a look of joy on her face clutching a book that I had just hand-delivered to her so she could read it over the weekend.

★ More skipping, this time by a seventh grade boy when he learned he could be a library aide.

★ The genuine look of horror on a sixth grade girl's face during our Banned Book Week lesson when confronted with the idea that books have been burned to censor them.

★ Upon hearing that some people disapprove of Captain Underpants because the principal is shown wearing only underpants, one student responds with a cheeky grin, "Well, would they prefer if he *wasn't* wearing any?"

★ A petition: "Bring Warriors to the Marshall Library!" signed by 28 students and with \$2 clipped to it! (How could I resist? I got the first series of 6 books within a week!)

★ A sixth grade girl from Africa, leaning on the counter totally absorbed in Toni Morrison's *Remember*, and the tears in her eyes after she asked me to explain what did it mean, the dedication at the back of the book with the pictures of the little girls who died in the church bombing? I wonder what I did to deserve such a privilege – the chance every day to see the world fresh again through my students' eyes?

★ "My mother used to paint like the pictures in this book. She doesn't live with us now because she abused me." Said matter-of-factly by a seventh grade girl. (This one hurts to hold, but it's very precious.)

★ I am touched each time a teacher, parent or student cares enough to donate time, money, supplies, and books. Even so, a few stand out, like the parent who arranged her cancer treatments so as not to interfere with her library volunteer hours. And the four daughters of a beloved English teacher who have made a sizable donation in her name each year on her birthday for six years. And the retired school nurse who has volunteered faithfully once a week for seven years.



★ The outstanding principal I'm lucky enough to work with who asks often what I think the library and the school need most, and then tries his best to get those things for us.

★ The math teacher who learned that students were put on a waiting list for a popular book, and went to a bookstore to buy another copy. He checks in every once in awhile to see if there are series books I can't provide and donates them.

★ The quiet hum when a class is working productively. (You know what I mean!)

★ Quotes... from a teacher, "You've made this library a happy place -- one where we don't mind coming." The parent, "You have such a nice setup here... I want to find a book and curl up and read." And the teacher who, in a student-created video said, "No, actually, what *really* made me want to come here was the Library. It was so warm and welcoming."

We are fortunate to touch so many lives in our work. Remember to embrace all the happy, the sorrowful, and the humorous events. When all those silly, annoying parts of the job start piling up, we can balance them against our treasures and remember we have the best job in the world!

Massachusetts Super Librarian Accolade (M.S.L.A.)

DESCRIPTION: Area Director's Award, one award per MSLA area for a total of six awards per year.

CRITERIA/ELIGIBILITY: Practicing MA library teachers with a professional library degree or state certification as a library teacher who has been a member of MSLA for the past three years.

APPLICATION/NOMINATION: Each AD will receive nominations and may make recommendations. The nominee will be submitted to the Executive Board for final approval.

AWARD: Certificate

RESPONSIBILITIES: Article for the MSLA Forum

DEADLINE for nomination is August 31, 2010