

Employee Spotlight

Deitra Barnes

Administrative Coordinator, Belmont Public Library

Each month, Town Administrator Patrice Garvin highlights a single employee whose hard work and dedication exemplifies what it means to be an employee for the Town of Belmont. In the Employee Spotlight series, we are able to shine a light on incredible employee achievements and provide an opportunity to introduce and recognize Belmont Town employees throughout the Belmont community.

In this month's Bulletin, Town Administrator Garvin would like to recognize Deitra Barnes of the Belmont Public Library. Deitra has worked for the Town of Belmont for 23 years at the library in her capacity as the Library's Administrative Coordinator. Over the years, Deitra has seen the growth of the library as a resource for the Belmont community and has become a valuable resource herself to library's daily operations.

Deitra describes her role at the library as one that provides "support" to the work of the Library Director, staff, Board of Library Trustees and the Friends of the Belmont Public Library to ensure that the library provides the "best possible resources and programs for the community and ensure that the library is a place for everyone." This work consists of a wide array of tasks that can range from drafting financial reports to fielding employee and library patron questions.

Library Director, Peter Struzziero describes Deitra as the "backbone of the library." Those who know and work with Deitra are likely to concur. Deitra brings professionalism and institutional knowledge to every challenge and finds herself being one of the first people to go to for advice on all things having to do with the library and its operations. Deitra takes her role as the "Library's Grand Central Station" head-on and with confidence as she takes in and processes work items to send back out to ensure that the job gets done.

The passion that Deitra has for the Belmont Library and libraries in general comes from days in her youth as a patron of the Central Square Library in Cambridge and the joy of reading. The first chapter of Deitra's work in Belmont begins after working as a math substitute for the Newton Public Schools and time as a computer programmer and doesn't begin at the library, but with the students at the High School. It wasn't long before she made her way to the library, where she began in a part-time role and within a few years her dedication expanded to a full-time role. The story continued to unfold over the course of many chapters and is still being written.



One of the biggest challenges that Deitra faces is her role is working with different personalities. Her advice is "be patient and focus on being a listener. People often just want to be heard. Over the years, I have learned to become a better listener to both staff and patrons." Deitra finds her motivation in knowing that "every work day is going to be a little different which keeps you on your toes and also to know that the work we do is helping people."

In an environment surrounded by books, inspiration is abundant. However, Deitra is quick to remind us that libraries are more than just the endless stacks of books and have evolved to become even broader resource centers. You will hardly ever hear a "sshh," Deitra explains: "There is always something happening that's different. I learned just a few days ago that our 'library of things' has an induction cooktop that can be checked out! There really is something for everyone at the library."

The Town of Belmont has begun working on its new library building and even though it will take a couple of years and the library staff have found temporary homes throughout Town, the excitement is palpable when looking forward to what is to come when talking with Deitra. "The old building will be missed, but the work of the Director, Trustees, Friends of the Library, and patrons to create a new library has been amazing to witness and be a part of. I have been around for several campaigns and library grant rounds over the years and have seen the energy and resources put in. To have assisted in a small way to see this goal put in motion and to know that the idea will become a reality is really rewarding."

Looking ahead, Deitra eagerly awaits the opening of the new building and the opportunity to continue working with her co-workers, including new faces at the library and getting to know some familiar faces better. Outside of her work at the Library, Deitra enjoys biking. Last year her daughter gifted her a membership to BlueBikes and Deitra has taken full advantage to explore many of the beautiful bike paths the region has to offer.