



Nominations for: Caroline "Xiaofang" Han

Senior Librarian
Cleveland Public Library
Cleveland, Ohio

Nominator: Lisa Gao

1. Please tell us in 2-3 sentences why your nominee should win this award. What sets him/her apart?

I would like to represent 15 people to nominate our librarian, Caroline Han, who not only provides the best collections, services and the most needed help to the community in the Library, but also initiated a senior program that has brought library services, information, knowledge out of the Library buildings and directly to our doors.

Caroline is an excellent librarian who manifests her devotion through the collections she developed, the services and programs she provided to the community. She is very knowledgeable about her work and understands readers' needs. Her programs not only provide useful information but also encourage learning and reading. Many of us, who could not go to the Library due to age and disability, can now access various information and knowledge through her program. Some visit the Library more to borrow books she recommended. We are able to enjoy reading more books and learning. Her program helps us to learn what is happening around us and in the world. Some of us who speak and read English enjoy learning more about American cultures. Some enjoy improving their English in order to be able to communicate more with other English speaking seniors.

Caroline is the only librarian who initiated and is providing this much needed service to our community. Her service has greatly improved the quality of our lives.

2. Please list a few ways in which the nominee has helped you and made your experience of the library a positive one.

The following are some personal experiences:

I moved to Cleveland from California. When I went to the Library, I did not have a library card. I wanted to use the computer but could not understand the procedures. I was referred to Ms. Han, who took me to different departments to help me get a temporary card and taught me how to use a library computer to access the Internet at the computer center. She left me with a very positive experience the first time I went to the Library. I have always wanted to learn to play a piano. When I could not find music scores and instructions in my native language in other libraries, I almost gave up. I went to Ms. Han and was very impressed by the broadness of the collection she has developed. She recommended quite a few music scores and instructions that are exactly what I was looking for. With her help, I have been able to fulfill my dream to learn to play a piano. Whenever I go to the Library, I know someone there I can rely on to fulfill my learning and reading needs.

W.Q. Tao: I almost got a big fine one time at the Library because of misunderstanding and I could not communicate in English with a Lending staff. Ms. Han came down from her department and explained to me the library's policy and to the Lending staff about the books that I still had and needed to be renewed. With her help, we got the issue resolved. Both the Lending staff and I were happy. I was most pleased that I was able to check out more books. I really appreciate the Library has such an excellent librarian who is willing to help us with any issues we may encounter in any department of the Library and to ensure that we always have a pleasant experience whenever we use the Library.

Mary Wang: I don't know much English but I want to learn English to be able to communicate with other people and to take the Citizenship test in the future. I cannot go to the library for the English classes because I cannot walk. Caroline has brought the library program out of the Library buildings and directly to our seniors center. Now I can use library services designed for people like me who cannot go to a library. Since she started the program for seniors, she has opened the door for me to learn English. In order to help me and others who want to learn more English and to prepare for the Citizenship test, she added citizenship knowledge, test questions and answers to her program and teaches us word by word. With her help, I am able to learn more with ease. She is excellent in helping us learn English language while introducing current news and health information. I cannot express enough of my appreciation.

Lily Li: Every time I go to the Library, Ms. Han always helps me to find the right book and recommend good books to me. She would always tell me about new publications to keep me informed. Because of her help, I like to come to the library and always feel welcomed. She is like a good teacher and a good friend. She makes me feel at home. Every trip to the library is a pleasant trip. The bilingual books she recommended to me raised my interest in learning more English and improved my language skills.

3. How has the librarian made a difference in the community? Please be specific.

X. Yu: I am library user for many years. I attended the City Hall's celebration of the Asian Pacific American Heritage each year. I always saw Caroline distributing library's information about books, programs and events. She keeps the community well informed. She has made our immigrants' life a lot easier. I witnessed her being awarded a certificate by the Mayor of Cleveland for her contribution to the community during a celebration event.

Through a tour of the collection when I brought my friends to visit the Library to show off the Library and our Chinese collection, we learned that Caroline selected almost every title for the collection based on readers' needs. She made connections for the library with international libraries, such as Shanghai Library, and established the Window of Shanghai Collection. I used to sit at a table reading those books from the collection. Many of the books she selected are bilingual including books introducing Chinese traditional medicine. I received flyers from the Library about the writing contest programs she coordinated with Shanghai Library encouraging readers to read books in either English and/or Chinese and to write about their experience visiting China or reading about Chinese history and culture. She uses these programs to promote the use of library collections and the understanding of different cultures among all communities.

L. Gao: More and more people start to learn Chinese because many are doing business with China or want to do business with China. Many parents want their children to learn Chinese. I saw the many

Chinese learning materials when I looked for books to help a friend to learn Chinese. I saw Ms. Han helps non-Chinese speakers and recommends books to them to learn foreign languages. She offers children's story time and Chinese learning programs in the Library. Some of our grandparents accompanied their grandchildren to attend her programs. She has brought positive influence to the community with programs that encourage people to read and learn.

4. How has the library, and the nominee, improved the quality of your life?

Mary Wang: She has brought the Library into my life. I am a senior with disability. I have never been to the Library due to disability, language barrier and lack of transportation. Since Caroline started the library program at our senior center, she has brought the library into my life. Through her program I learn information about various foods, various nutrition they provide and how they can best benefit our health, and why some food are not good to some people with certain health concerns. She also read stories we all enjoy since some of us cannot read. She has brought spiritual food to us and made our life more enjoyable.

F.Ma: I often have to visit doctors for my illness. However, I did not know how to say some of the basic words to express how I feel. During every program, Ms. Han taught us the vocabulary that people often use when visiting a doctor. Now I could at least pronounce some of the words and use the basic expressions that I have learned through her program. Ms. Han brought critical health information to us while combining it with English learning, such as learning about identifying the early signs of strokes using the FAST (face, arm, speech, time) guides. Each time, she also teaches us how to say in English about the food on our lunch menu at the seniors center, the history and stories behind some of the food names. This kind of library service is what we need. It helps us learn and improves the quality of our life.

X. Yu: I tried to watch some news in English but often got discouraged for not being able to fully understand. Caroline has not only brought current news information to us through her service to keep us informed of what's going on around us and in the world, but also used the information to help us learn English and taught us how to understand sentence structures. Now I watch more news and try to find something common to talk about with the English speakers.

Lily Li: I am a senior Chinese American who loves reading. Five years ago, I decided to move to the apartment building that is close to the Library where the Foreign Language Department is located after I heard that there is a rich Chinese library collection and a librarian who is very good and patient in Cleveland library. At that time I was able to go to the library more often each week to read Chinese books, magazines. I got to know Ms. Han. I admire her devotion to providing excellent collections and services to anyone who comes in to use the department. She is very professional and knowledgeable. With her help and her recommendation, I read many good books that have expanded my horizons and many bilingual books that have improved my English. Now despite that I could not walk as much as I used to, I still read many books and participate in the programs Ms. Han provides in our senior center that is very convenient to us. I do not feel lonely. Instead, I live a rich and confident life. Through her programs, I receive new book information, enjoy reading new books, learning more about the American society. We travel with her through pictures of beautiful natures, to learn major events happening around the world, American culture, food, and historical events. We learn to live a healthy life through the information on healthy living she provides us. My friends who are older and cannot go to the Library told me that Ms. Han is very kind to people, especially to those who are old and weak or have disabilities. One of her effort is to have brought library services to our doors, and sent books to us. Since we are seniors and immigrated to the U.S. at a much older age, many of us speak limited English. But we never stop learning. Ms. Han recognized our needs

and offered such a wonderful program that let us enjoy the learning of the English language while learning about new information, new knowledge and new ways to improve our brain power to prevent or postpone the possibilities of getting Alzheimer disease. We could see from the handouts she gives to us that she has put lots of thoughts and hard work to meet our needs. Through her program, the Library is no longer behind the walls and inside buildings. She is the bridge between us and the American society and culture and the world. The Library and Ms. Han have greatly improved our quality of life.

5. How does the nominee make the library a better place?

Comparing with the Libraries I know and have visited, I am very impressed with the Cleveland library. Caroline has made it a better place. When I first walked into the Library and saw the Chinese collection, I was surprised and I did not expect to see so many good and valuable Chinese books and magazines in a library in the Midwest. The books she selected for readers meet many people's needs. No other places offer such a rich Chinese collection with such a variety in subjects. Many readers are interested in history, health and healthy living, cookbooks on Chinese traditional food, different Asian foods, and from American food to European foods. They can find many and the most current publications on these and many other subjects. Readers who would like to read books about history and politics or do their research, they will find many of them that are bought from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Friends from other countries were surprised to see the books that they never had a chance to see in their home country because of political ban. Many of the big books with beautiful pictures of natures, or pictures of history and Chinese art pieces are on display and attract readers to enjoy them in the Library while visiting. They can also bring them home to share with family members and friends. Nowadays, college students and teenagers also start to visit the collection. The expanded children's collection attracts parents and children.

Caroline makes it more easy for readers to know about the arrivals of new books. She keeps all community members well informed of the new books by posting many booklists online and reminding people through e-mail. For the ones who don't use e-mails, printed booklists are mailed to their homes.

During weekends, the Chinese section has become a place for many families to enjoy reading or browsing or for children to enjoy the Chinese stories that Ms. Han reads to them and to learn to write Chinese words.

Her initiative bringing library programs and information services out of the library buildings to the life of the community members, especially the seniors, many of whom could not access the Library because of old age or because of disability. The books she recommended to us and the content of she provides through her programs have presented a librarian who is very creative, hard-working and very caring about library users' needs. These programs also brought back more user visits to the Library and to the collection.

Each time my friends and I go to use the Library, we feel welcomed through Ms. Han's patient service to answer our questions and find what we need for us. If we encountered any issues with our borrowing, returning and renewing books, we know she is the one who will help us to communicate with other departments. We come to use the Library because of the good books and someone like Ms. Han who provides excellent services. She puts every effort to help users and make them feel welcomed. She has made the Library a better place.

The nominators are Lisa Gao, Zhen Yang Liu, Sun Shu Duan, Zeng Shu Zhen, Xiu Juan Yu, Fu Xin Ma, Jun Liu, Heng Zhu Ling, Yang Shao Bo, Sung Jung Lin, Qi Tao, Zhang Zheng, Lily Li, Mary Wang, and Kang Ni Lee.