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Get to Know: Laura Bruzas of the Western Springs Library

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Laura Bruzas relaxes and reads in front of the Western Springs Library Fireplace. -- Photo Courtesy of the Thomas Ford Memorial Library

Laura Bruzas likes to start sentences with "can you imagine?" And, in her first 90 days as marketing and public relations coordinator for Western Springs' Thomas Ford Memorial Library, she has had to use her own imagination in making several changes to the library. TribLocal recently took the time to get to know Bruzas, and her plans for the library.

Q - Your first 90 days are over at the library. What changes has the library gone through?

A - We re-carpeted the Library and put on a fresh coat of paint. For the first time, we participated in the Western Springs Christmas Walk. Our newsletter has a new look and name - The Ford Connection. We have a new theme for 2009, too. It's The Year of Living Well.

We launched the Thomas Ford Collection Club (a joint effort between The Thomas Ford Memorial Library and the Thomas Ford Library Foundation). The Collection Club is designed to help enrich the Library's collection of materials while providing donors with the tax advantages that the Foundation, a 501(c)(3) corporation, provides.

We've reached out to the Western Springs business community. One example of this is Paul Virant who generously offered dinner for two at his award-winning restaurant Vie in Western Springs (www.vierestaurant.com) to one lucky patron who signs up to receive our e-news between now and Feb. 28, 2009.

We've also upped our green efforts by adding recycling bins for Cd's and cell phones and continue to offer a place for patrons to drop off their used eye glasses. Our old newspapers are now going to a local animal shelter. We are promoting the proper disposal of batteries and compact fluorescent bulbs (as they contain mercury) and offer drop boxes for these items, too. We've added organic coffee and organic, trans-fat-free creamer to our "mini coffee bar" and keep the price to an affordable 75 cents a cup. I'm still working on replacing our Styrofoam coffee cups, which are not too good for our health or the health of Mother Earth, with a better option.

Q - What can people expect to see in 2009?

- A -
- More programs that can help our patrons manage their budgets and deal with the strains imposed upon by the current economic crisis, promote personal and professional growth and entertain
 - Continual updates and improvements to our web site
 - Cool additions to our collection
 - Fresh new faces at the Library as new families move in
 - Familiar faces returning
 - New photographs in our Teen Lounge - we are having a teen photo contest

Q - What about five years from now?

A - I can't say for sure but do see the road as a wonderful adventure filled with many lessons, love, opportunities for growth and community-building, enjoyment and much more.

Q - What should every Western Springs resident know about their library?

A - We're here for you! Our goal is to deliver exceptional customer service and be a trusted source for the information you want and need. We offer lots of resources and programs that are not only informative but entertaining as well.

And, if you don't find something in our collection that you want - ask us! Oftentimes we can get it for you either via Inter Library Loan or by adding it to our collection! It is one of the most important services that our Library provides.

Q - Some have said the Internet will be the death of Libraries. What do you think?

A - I think not as the library is not only about information but also about community and connection. Part of our job is to embrace technology (including the Internet) and continually update our collection and offerings but we also provide space for programs, community gatherings and meetings as well as for peace and quiet.

Q - Have you seen changes in library use because of current economic conditions?

A - Absolutely! Whenever the economy suffers, library usage goes up and ours is no exception. Our patrons literally save thousands of dollars per year by capturing library offerings (books, magazines, newspapers, videos, DVDs, audio books) versus purchasing them. We offer meeting rooms and computers for community use and interesting programs and classes that not only educate but also entertain.

Did I mention our reference desk? We have a team of top-notch, in-the-know reference librarians on standby to answer your personal and professional questions - no matter what the topic may be! You can even book a Librarian for up to 30 minutes to help you answer research questions or learn a new computer skill.

Q - When you aren't working at the library, what are you busy with?

A - When I'm not at the library, I'm working on HealthyDining.org, an all-volunteer, eco-friendly community education and outreach effort that I founded in 2003 or spending time with my shelter-adopted, canine companion, Happy.

By [Mick Swasko](#) / TribLocal.com Reporter

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