

To Whom It May Concern,

First and foremost, thank you so much for the thoughtfulness that the Friends of the Library have put into awarding a scholarship for a student obtaining a library science degree. It is truly an honor for me to have the opportunity to apply. My name is Charity Hatley and I've previously taught 4th grade for 5 years in Keller ISD and 2 years in Weatherford where I taught 4th and 2nd grades. Immediately when I began teaching years ago, I felt and understood the importance of teaching to inspire the 21st century learner. I soon took notice that integrating digital tools into lessons so that my students could explore, research, learn, and create heightened their engagement and motivation in the learning process. Over the next several years, I continued to feel encouraged to make the necessary changes in the classroom to "upgrade" it from a teacher directed learning environment to a student centered, technology-rich, and exploring environment. I consider myself a life-long learner and do not want to settle just with the knowledge that I currently know. Additionally, I wanted to be able to take on more of a leadership role in inspiring other teachers to embrace all that technology in learning as to offer. I chose to further my education first by beginning graduate school at Tarleton State University and I will graduate in just 7 days with a Master's of Education in Curriculum and Instruction with a concentration in Instructional Design and Technology. Last school year, beginning in August of 2014 (and midway through my degree at Tarleton), I was given the opportunity to utilize my passion of technology leadership and advocacy for literature, digital media and research at Acton Middle School here in Granbury. I am thrilled to be serving the students and staff at AMS as their librarian/media specialist. I have completed 4 courses in UNT's School Library Certification program over the course of the school year and summer, while also completing the remainder of my Tarleton Graduate School courses.

Although I knew it would take even more perseverance and dedication to take on additional schooling this past year, I was up for the challenge and had no hesitations in my decision to begin my library science courses in UNT's school library program. It is evident that libraries are evolving to meet the needs of 21st century learners. I feel strongly that my role as a middle school librarian is all encompassing. I definitely do not let my passion for technology in education become any more important than my advocacy for literature, reading, and research. As a librarian, I encourage and promote a love for reading among students. I feel that so many life lessons can be learned through literature and students are taken on adventures through reading that they may not otherwise be able to experience. It is my pleasure to help students locate reading material most interesting to them to help continue their love for reading so that it may stay a priority even when their lives get even busier. Furthermore, I help students identify a need for information, and locate, evaluate and use literature to meet that need through inquiry and research, whether digitally or non-digitally.

Just like classrooms, libraries must continually adapt and "upgrade" to meet the needs of our learners today. This is my passion and the reason why I am pursuing my library science certification through the University of North Texas. Thanks so much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Charity Hatley
Acton Middle School Librarian