

Kasey Whalley

I'm Kasey Whalley, a library technician working in a large metropolitan school board for over ten years and currently finishing my master of information at the University of Toronto.

Martha Attridge Bufton

And I'm Martha Attridge Bufton, the Interdisciplinary Studies Librarian at the Carleton University Library. I've been with what is now Research Support Services for eleven years and I started as a subject specialist so I belonged to CUPE 2424, a local at the university. And then in 2017 I finished my Master of Library and Information Studies program at the University of Alberta and was fortunate enough to be hired as a librarian.

Kasey Whalley

It was a very strange journey to get here. I started with an undergraduate degree, immediately went into a technician program and now I've been working for about seven years and decided to go back to get my masters in information, especially focused on youth programming. I care deeply about advocacy, collaboration and understanding youth programs in action. It was something that I felt would help give me the skills and knowledge for working in libraries outside of the school environment but still provide for working within youth programming.

Martha Attridge Bufton

Like you, my journey has been kind of interesting because I've certainly been in two different occupational groups at the university. This new podcast series is about how we work together as people who are in different unions, different occupations but still all committed delivering the best kind of library service to, in our case students and teachers.

Our journeys are interesting to me because my own historical research is on the unionization of faculty, librarians and support staff at Carleton University, which happened in the mid-70s. In doing that research, I discovered that the conversations about occupations in the library sector have really long historical roots. In fact, the library technicians programs that we know in Ontario and that have produced so many fine graduates really were emerging in the late 60s and early 70s at the same time that librarians were really, at least in the academic sector, were really thinking about their status on campuses not just in Ontario but across the country. And in fact, the librarians at Carleton were in

the position where they felt they were in a bit of a grey zone between professors and support staff in the library. That they weren't really visible or recognized people with advanced degrees and a lot of expertise in academic research, that the age-old problem of everybody in the library looking the same was something that they faced every day.

And so their decision to join the Carleton University Academic Staff Association (CUASA) was really driven by the fact that they wanted to align with other campus staff with whom they thought they had the greatest interest. So these conversations are really important and they have long historical roots.

Kasey Whalley

Especially with the recent tensions in our industry from both political and organizational pressures, notably our provincial government changing and the tension at the OLA annual general meeting, this is an opportunity I think for us to talk about these tensions in a safe and open forum.

From discord to discourse will open the channels of communication across the industry and allow library professionals to express opinions, explore best practices and share occupational troubles and triumphs with listeners and each other. We will fortify our industry across all sectors.

And I think this is such an important opportunity that we can provide in Open Shelf because so often these are the conversations that we need to have but we don't always want to have, do we?

Kasey Whalley

And I think that's very important to note and also take into consideration when we have these conversations is that they might be uncomfortable and they might be difficult but I think partly to have a better understanding with the people we work with and the people in our industry.

Yes, because I think we all bring a tremendous array of skills to the table plus a real passion for the libraries as public institutions. It just makes sense that collaborations that we already engage with and the ones we're going to engage with just allow us all to do a much better job and provide relevant and transformative programs for the folks who come into our libraries.

Kasey Whalley

I'm really hoping that this can be an example of advocacy, collaborations and understanding in action. I'm really excited to be having these conversations.