

COLLEGE & RESEARCH LIBRARIES NEWS

ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE &
RESEARCH LIBRARIES

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About the cover

In the latter third of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, an auxiliary industry to the many nurseries in Rochester, New York, was the production of hand-colored and chromolithographic prints of fruits, flowers, and vegetables. These nurseryman's plates were mounted on cloth tapes to fold out to show several at a time, or bound in volumes. Salesmen used them to solicit orders from customers. Shown is a plate of a *Clematis Jackmanii* made by J. W. Thompson & Co. of Rochester and used by salesmen in the 1880s. A collection of these colorful plates, plate books, and plate maps is in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections at the University of Rochester Library.

Hosting future librarians

By Yvonne N. Marion and Linnie U. Smith

Celebrating "Take Our Daughters to Work Day"

One are the days when buns and pin-stripped suits adorned the heads and bodies of library staff. This and many more stereotypes and images were banished at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) on Thursday, April 27, 1995, on "Take Our Daughters to Work Day." In observance of this day, children joined their relatives—VCU library faculty and staff—to get a view of the world of work. "Take Our Daughters to Work Day," an annual event held nationwide, was created in 1993 by the Ms. Foundation for Women. Last year more than 25 million people participated in this national campaign. This year's theme was "A Girl Is Watching. What Is She Learning?" which highlights the important educational aspects of the celebration.

The VCU Libraries' celebration of this day slightly differed from the national campaign. So that both girls and boys could be included in this celebration, it was called "Take Our Children To Work Day." Also, the modified theme was "Children Are Watching. What Are They Learning?" Eleven children aged seven to eleven participated in this event.

The goals of the celebration were to introduce the children to a learning environment in

hopes that they would be encouraged to read books, attend college, and explore career goals; to help them develop an appreciation for their relatives' jobs and careers; to maintain an academic environment while having fun; to learn from the children while teaching them; to boost morale among library staff; and to make this an annual event at the VCU Libraries.

The children did not encounter just books and straightlaced librarians—they encountered a satellite dish, African-American and Asian library staff, humorous and "cool" staff, and state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment. They also learned hands-on about a wide array of library services and resources: Disney on the Internet via World Wide Web, sending e-mail and fax messages, searching for books on the online catalog, visiting the Children's Book Collection, learning about bindery preparation. All of these elements enhanced the children's appreciation of the library and left them with the perception that a library can be a fun place to visit and work.



Children of VCU staff visit the library for "Take Our Children to Work Day."

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If anyone asks the children who attended the celebration, "What does a librarian do?" their responses would not be "check out books and help people." Unfortunately, this is the image that most children (and adults) have of library staff. These children had the opportunity to observe many nontraditional roles of paraprofessionals and librarians and glimpse into the future of what more and more libraries will be moving toward in serving diverse populations.

At the end of a successful, exhausting day, and after receiving certificates of participation, book marks, free books, and VCU paraphernalia (including key chains, stickers, pencils, pens, banners, balls, and pompons), the children seemed thoroughly satisfied. This made us happy, but one comment at the end of the day thrilled us: John, an energetic and sharp seven-

year-old, asked in a bashful voice, "Could I become a librarian one day?"

Despite the challenges that libraries are facing, we need to remember (and remind others) that change can be good and libraries do make a difference! Let's also remember the positive effects that libraries and library staff have on fellow book lovers, future librarians, and children like John.

It took the efforts of paraprofessionals and librarians working together to make this event a success. The impressions that the VCU library faculty and staff have left with these children will help them to appreciate libraries and explore the possibility of becoming a modern-day librarian. Who knows? By the time these children finish school, librarians may be called virtual specialists. ■

Schedule of Children's Day events

8:00–8:30 a.m.

Continental breakfast

- Children met and greeted the library director and assistant directors.
- Children introduced themselves and told what they knew about their relatives' jobs.
- The library director talked with children about the history of University Library Services.

8:30–9:00 a.m.

- Children went with their relatives to their offices and met their coworkers.

9:00–9:30 a.m.

- Children learned about the Children's Book Collection.

9:30–10:00 a.m.

- Children learned how to send and receive e-mail and fax messages and use other office equipment.

10:00–10:15 a.m.

- Children played games that allowed them to learn each other's names.

10:15–11:15 a.m.

- Children were taken on a tour of the Cabell Library.

11:15 a.m.–noon

- Children learned about Media Support Services and made videotapes of themselves.

Noon–1:00 p.m.

- Children ate lunch with their relatives.

1:00–1:30 p.m.

- Children learned how to use the online catalog.

1:30–2:00 p.m.

- Children toured preservation services and learned how to mark/label materials.

2:00–3:00 p.m.

- Children toured coed dormitories and the University Student Commons.

3:00–4:00 p.m.

- Children relaxed with refreshments.
- Children played library games consisting of educational questions based on their day of activities.
- Children made books and received awards and prizes.

4:00 p.m.

- Children were reunited with their relatives and departed the library.

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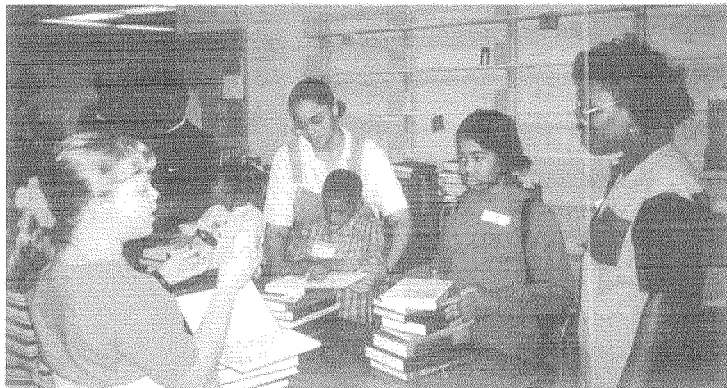
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