

Meet our staff! This month, we are profiling Baker & Taylor's Rita King, Children's and Teen Services Manager for the Western half of the country. She hails from the Detroit metropolitan area, and currently resides in the great state of Michigan.

Q. Hi Rita. First off, tell us a little bit about what your job role entails at Baker & Taylor.

I am the Children's and Teen Services Manager for the Western Region which includes everything west of the Mississippi River plus Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin. I meet with Children's and Teen librarians to help streamline their workflow and help answer any questions and/or training needs they may have from Baker & Taylor. When I was getting my MLIS from Wayne State University there was a professor that told us as a librarian we would serve as a gateway to information. I like to think of myself as a gateway for librarians into Baker & Taylor now.

Q. And what inspired you to be a librarian?

I was going to school to get my Master's so I could teach high school business classes when I took a part-time position as a children's librarian at my local library. Before I knew what hit me, I was going back to get my MLIS instead! It was one of the best decisions I could have made. I loved working at the public library. It gave me an opportunity to learn about things such as Early Literacy, Makerspaces, Management, and more. The library definitely serves as a life-long learning opportunity as a patron and as an employee.

Q. In your many travels across the western US, we know you see a lot of libraries! Would you care to share a unique library or two you've seen, and what was so unique about them?

I have so many libraries that I love for so many different reasons! If I don't list a library here it doesn't mean it isn't on my favorite list. It just means I was limited to space in my answer. Here are a few highlights of my favorite parts of some of the libraries...

- San Diego Public Library – The Hervey Family Rare Book Room that houses a collection of rare books and materials. The room has a 14-foot long study table made from a 4—pound slabs of a eucalyptus tree.
- Austin Public Library – The many outside spaces in this library are beautiful and cozy. I could hang there for hours.
- East Baton Rouge Parish Library - The first thing that caught my eye was the big fountain out front and the outside area.
- Seattle Public Library – Let's just say red is my favorite color.



- Pittsburg Public Library, KS – so much history and a great use of space.
- Wyoming Branch of the Kent District Library – it will always hold a special place in my heart since I was the youth specialist there for over 12 years. I loved the community as well as the creative and playful children’s area.

Q. When you’re not in a library or traveling to one, what do you like to do?

I am a 200 RYT Yoga Instructor and love to study the life science of Ayurveda. I also love running, mountain biking with my husband, and cuddling with my youngest of 3 boys (which just happens to be of canine descent). The other boys are in their 20’s...

Q. Any favorite reads (or characters) you’d like to tell us about?

I have a passion for picture books. I think that picture books can be read at any age. They can be lighthearted, funny, compassionate, and/or educational. One of my favorite pictures books is *Grumpy Bird* by Jeremy Tankard. It reminds me that even if I wake up feeling grumpy I can turn my day around by just being with those that love me the most. I can be grumpy, but I don’t have to stay grumpy!

Q. And finally, if you were to choose an adventure for our favorite furry mascots, Baker and Taylor, what might that be?

I think Baker & Taylor traveling to public libraries all over the United States to uncover mysteries and local history facts at each location would be the next best series for sure!



Stay tuned for future Meet the Staff introductions, and if there’s anyone you’d like to see gracing the pages of the CATS Meow, let us know at CATS@baker-taylor.com.

We hope you enjoy. -Baker & Taylor CATS