

Interview with Liz Fitzgerald and Suzanna Urminska of the Free Library of Philadelphia

Hello, and welcome back to Beyond the Stacks: Innovative Careers in Library and Information Science. I'm your host, Elizabeth Reilly and today you will hear from two librarians who work at the Culinary Literacy Center in the Free Library of Philadelphia.

Liz Fitzgerald is the Administrator of the Free Library of Philadelphia's Culinary Literacy Center, the first of its kind in a library in the United States. She has worked at the Free Library since 2008, working in the Catalog Department and as a Branch Manager and Children's Librarian in West Philadelphia before opening the Culinary Literacy Center in 2014. In 2016, Liz was named a Mover & Shaker by Library Journal. Before her tenure at the FLP, Liz was a Teen Services Librarian at the Ocean County Library in New Jersey. She has her MLIS from Rutgers University and a BA from Loyola University in Maryland.

Suzanna Urminska is the Library Coordinator of the Culinary Literacy Center. Suzanna joined the Culinary Literacy Center in 2015 and became the Library Coordinator in June 2016. As library coordinator, she develops, coordinates, and presents innovative programming, and builds and maintains key partnerships. Suzanna joined the Free Library in 2007 and has worked in a variety of capacities: Volunteer Outreach Specialist, Afterschool Leader, and Librarian. She has substantial food education experience, and as part of her MLIS degree, completed Consumer Health and Community Librarianship internships. Suzanna has a BA in Anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania, a Master's in American Studies from Yale University, and a MLIS from the University of Pittsburgh.

Hi guys! Thank you so much for joining me!

Liz: Thank you for being here, Elizabeth.

Suzanna: Thanks for having us.

Elizabeth: Thank you! Just to get started off, I'm going to ask each of you to tell us a little bit about your educational background, where you went to undergrad and any advanced degrees. So if Liz, you'd like to start?

Liz: Sure! I went to Loyola University in Maryland for my undergrad. I have my degree in creative writing and photography. And then I got my MLIS at Rutgers University.

Suzanna: And I did my undergrad at the University of Pennsylvania where I majored in anthropology and minored in photography. And then I did a masters at Yale in American Studies and then followed up with a masters in library and information science from the University of Pittsburgh.

Elizabeth: I guess why did you choose to get your masters degree in library science?

Liz: Well it was a classic case of my quarter life crisis. I was in a job right out of undergrad at a publishing house. I mistakenly thought publishing was about books, and it is not, it is about business. I didn't want to spend my whole life plunking away in front of Excel spreadsheets and messing with a photocopier. So I thought about something that I really enjoyed and maybe wanted to pursue and I there was a really influential librarian in my life and I thought why not go back and become a librarian myself?

Elizabeth: Who was that influential librarian in your life?

Liz: So her name is Cindy Fine. She...my father was a principal of an elementary school growing up and she was his school librarian and for at least 2 years in the mornings before school I would have to go with him to work and catch the bus from his school to get to mine. And every morning I would spend my time in the library and Cindy...I now see how wonderful of a reader's advisory experience this must have been for her professionally but Cindy just gave me all of these amazing book after book after book. And I really came to view the library as a special place with these magical people who could really just help you find yourself and learn new things. So I wanted to be like her.

Elizabeth: That's a really nice story! How about yourself?

Suzanna: I also had an experience where I was kind of doing a pivot of sorts but it came from a different place in the sense that growing up my experience at libraries was very positive when it came to interfacing with the materials but not always so positive when it came to interfacing with the staff. I had some pretty classic experiences with the sort of quintessential mean librarian. So I didn't always look at librarians as positive role models. And when I came to work at the Free Library I was actually working on our foundation side not as a librarian in our volunteer department, youth services department, those experiences really kind of showed me the sort of vast array of services that a library could offer the public. And then instead of thinking about looking at museums and archives where I had been working for years as special touch points to engage the public I suddenly saw the library as a place to do that.

Elizabeth: Right yeah so yeah like you just mentioned you worked at museums and archives before so what was, what kind of work did you do at those places and where did you work?

Suzanna: So some of it was a Penn as a work study student and had some really interesting experiences working with the American collection to return materials to Native American tribes through the NAGPRA agreement. And then after college I worked in a private archive of primarily 19th century photography but also photography by women. And then that's sort of what propelled me to do a degree at Yale where I felt like that would allow me to further look at archives as this place where everyone could engage with the materials. Turns out that it's a you know challenging arena to kind of position yourself in that way and that its something you can advocate for yourself to do later in your career. And I also decided that I didn't want to be an academic.

Elizabeth: Got it.

Suzanna: So when I came to the Free Library that was really that turning point for me and kind of reimagining the library for myself as a user and then also as an employee.

Elizabeth: So when you realized publishing was not for you, you decided to pursue an MLIS. What did you envision doing? Like when you first entered school, what did you think you were going to do at the end of it?

Liz: So I did a specialty in media, in school media and so I wanted to be a school librarian and I actually did my field experience with Cindy Fine. I got to go back and do my time....

Elizabeth: That's so cool!

Liz: Yeah! That experience with her and it was this beautiful full circle moment and I learned so much from her about what it means to be a school media specialist. And I was there for a semester and I really thought that this is what I was going to be going into, that I would end up in a school library. It just didn't work out that way. I simultaneously had been apart of a trainee program through the Ocean County Public Library of New Jersey and I ended up staying on there working as a teen services librarian after I completed the trainee program.

Elizabeth: Got it. So then after the teen services where did you go from there?

Liz: I was doing teen services in Ocean County and I...*[sigh]* as the story often goes I met someone and he was in Philadelphia and so I moved here to Philadelphia and was still commuting back and forth to Ocean County it was an hour and a half each way.

Elizabeth: That's rough.

Liz: Yea. And so I was applying like mad to anywhere that was in closer proximity. And I applied and interviewed PLA or ALA Midwinter I applied there got an interview and got a call saying do you want to work in the cataloging department at the Free Library. I *never* thought I wanted to work in a cataloging department. It somewhat appealed to me...I actually liked the class in library school because it appealed to the part of me that wants to put everything in order and in place to be able to find it later and so I said sure why not and it was around the corner from where I was living so my quality of life immediately shot through the roof.

Elizabeth: Did you hold other positions at the free library besides cataloging?

Liz: Yes so I was in the cataloging department for probably 2.5 years. And then I promoted out to be a branch manager in West Philadelphia. And so I was the children's librarian and the branch manager there and then I moved to a different branch to be the children's librarian and branch manager at that branch.

Elizabeth: Ok, cool! So Suzanna we talked about Liz's field experience during her studies. Did you have any similar experiences during your studies that were really inspirational, influential?

Suzanna: Definitely. So one of my favorite classes was a Consumer Health Resources and Services class taught by this *amazing* library professor. Just on a personal level I found her really inspiring. And she had sort of the opposite sort of stereotypical qualities that you might find in this sort of like grandmother figure that just really makes you want to be apart of this work.

And it was also just very inspiring to me to learn more about what it means to have patron come to you with real needs and how to be able to properly do this activity of the reference interview in a way that is, you know...you're conducting that interview with dignity, with ethics in mind, and you're also, you know, really bringing that person to the right types of materials and potentially even expanding the notion of what their original ask was. And that I just found to be really incredible.

And I also followed that class up with a field experience at the AIDS Library here in Philadelphia where I was able to answer reference questions through the mail mostly from folks that were incarcerated on a whole range of health topics. Everything from nutrition, to different types of treatment that they were exploring for various longer-term illnesses and that was a really wonderful experience in and of it self.

Elizabeth: Yeah that sounds really interesting. Are there any asks or letters that stand out in your mind?

Suzanna: In terms of asks that came through the AIDS Library, I actually found ones that had to do with food to be the most interesting because you know, I really had to educate myself on what was accessible to folks that were locked up so within those parameters be able to share information that could work in terms of where they were. And I also just learned a lot in terms of digital resources that the AIDS Library subscribed to that I was able to then kind of put together into these neat packages. And you know, one thing that was so amazing to me is that the work that the AIDS Library really creates these longer term relationships so that there were people, you know, I was communicating with who were incarcerated who then would come and use the full array of services and resources at the AIDS Library following their term, their time of being in jail.

Elizabeth: Right, right. So I can sort of see how that leads and connects to your work now. Um so I'd love to hear about the culinary literacy center? Like what is it, what's its history, where'd it come from, where's it going?

Liz: Sure! How much time do you have?

Elizabeth: Oh I have all day! But yeah tell us the story!

Liz: The culinary literacy center was the brainchild of Siobhan Reardon, our president and director. I was built as part of the ongoing renovations to the Parkway Central Library, our main branch. Decades ago, there was a cafeteria up here, and it since closed. We also do catered events up here on the fourth floor, all through the library we do weddings, corporate events and we have caterers that come in. so when they were renovating the kitchen space, Siobhan said we need to put a classroom space in here as well not just be a space for caterers.

And we have been tasked with connecting literacy to cooking and there are many different ways that literacy and cooking and food intersect. And it's not just, when we're talking about literacy it's not just reading and writing but it's also math, science and technology, it's cultural and historical literacies, it's health and nutrition. We cast a really wide net in terms of how we define literacy at it pertains to cooking and food here in our space. And so we have been open...we opened June 2nd of 2014 and since then we have seen nearly 16,000 people.

Elizabeth: Wow! That's incredible!

Liz: Yes! It is!

Elizabeth: That's so cool!

Liz: We have programs for everyone from preschoolers to seniors and everyone in between. We do on average about 30 programs a month. And so we...so the space, it's a commercial grade kitchen classroom where we have 3 different cameras that all feed into a large screen TV that's in the corner of the front of the room.

There's a giant prep table at the very front and then we have seats for 36. So we're able to make sure that anyone who is seated in the center can see what the chef is doing through the cameras. And so we have been doing a really wide range of programs, everything from ESL to making vegan soups to seed swaps, to butchery programs it really runs the gamut of programming.

Elizabeth: So what are your specific roles in the functioning of the center?

Liz: So I am the administrator of the program. And Suzanna is the library coordinator here. And so I am really in charge of overseeing the program in an administrative capacity and supervising staff. And also with working with our foundation and with other administrators in the building. And steering the direction of the program with plenty of input and help and support from our beautiful staff of four.

Elizabeth: Wow, it's just four of you that do everything?

Liz: Yes! It is. It started with just one.

Elizabeth: Was that you?

Liz: It was me. And I have scrounged together this team. I use the word steal but I don't that think that's necessarily accurate. I plucked Suzanna from the children's department. We had been collaborating on programs pretty much from the beginning. And um so I stole her up here for this department. And then Jamie Bowers, the other librarian who's in the department, she was coming back from leave and I advocated for another position so that we could bring her on. We also have Joanne Louie who is our library assistant. And I stole her from another department. So...

Elizabeth: Yeah. So when did you transition from the children's center to here?

Suzanna: So I actually had the good fortune and wonderful supervision that allowed me to work part time in the children's department while also collaborating with Liz. So it wasn't until what? About a year ago? That I came up here and I was actually working part time throughout the time that I was in children's department and also even when I came up here to spend all of my hours here, somewhat by choice um but was very happy to finally go full time.

Liz: We are just very recently four full-time staff members. It's been...for a long time, I was the only full time staff member and then we had three part time people. So now we are running at capacity of four full time people, which is wonderful.

Elizabeth: Yeah. So, what have been some of the challenges of this endeavor?

Suzanna: I think that honestly some of the same challenges have also been our strengths. We've done a lot of learning on the job. You know one of the visions of the Free Library as a whole is really to facilitate life long learning and I'd like to say that we all actively engage in that process everyday. But that it can also be a real challenge, you know? We're engaged in curriculum development but don't necessarily have all of us do not have formal training on curriculum development so we really have to learn that process as we go and make mistakes and learn from our mistakes. I think the smaller staff size at times has been a challenge and I think we've been able to make it work and you know, as we grow, it's really a process of then learning how to collaborate most effectively. I think that really comes from in turn one of our strengths which is that this has always been a collaboration driven mission. We have over 30 partnerships and so that's been something that's really been a win for us overall.

Liz: I would say that one of the challenges again, like Suzanna said, is also one of the most exciting things about this in that we are the first public library, first library in America to have a program like this. And so it's exciting in that we get to define what it means to do culinary literacy programming in a public library. But it is also super challenging because we *have to* define what it means to do culinary literacy programming. And so we're in large part, like, making this up as we go along in a way that is wonderful and fun but it also...there's no model so, so that part can be a little difficult.

But, you know, we get calls and emails regularly from around the world. From libraries and from community centers and other nonprofits who say, "We heard about what you're doing, we love it, tell me how you did it. We want to do it in our space." And so I am always...I err on the side of just sharing everything, you know? I will send out our specs, I'll tell people about our budget, there's very little that I don't share because I want to see other people do this. That, to me, is success if other places, other libraries are replicating this model successfully.

Elizabeth: Yeah, definitely. So are there any other rewarding moments you've had during...I mean I'm sure there are many. You mentioned the challenge is also the benefit but yeah I guess just anything else that sticks out to you?

Liz: I mean at the heart of all of this programming really are our patrons and the people who come through our doors. You know the thing about...one of my answers to "why a kitchen in a library" is that so often you know beyond the advancing literacy bit, there's also the big strength that we have here is community building. And civic engagement and bringing people together. If you think about your kitchen in your home, it really is the heart of the home. I mean you go to a party and where does everyone convene? Everyone is in the kitchen. Because it's a space where it's warm, it's inviting. Everyone has their own personal food stories that they bring with them, it's universal and so our most successful classes create a real sense of community where it doesn't feel like you're in a million dollar kitchen; it feels like

you're in your friend's kitchen. That you're sharing a meal, you're sharing this experience with other people.

And anecdotally, I mean there are hundreds of stories. I just think of our ESL program where we are working with an organization that serves recent refugees and the students are coming in here after coming to America, leaving behind insanely disastrous circumstances and they come here and what we are able to offer is a space that is safe and a non traditional classroom space where people are yes, they're learning English but also they're feeling comfortable, they're feeling like they have ownership and a stake in the Free Library of Philadelphia. And so it's those connections that we get to make with our patrons but that they get to make with one another that are really special.

Suzanna: And I think this space is really a touch point for our library system as a whole. So its through this space that we not only can get to engage potentially new library users such as refugees but also college students. You know, the 20-40-age range is not necessarily the library's most active population but here we have people who are coming in and then they're learning about what else the library system has to offer. They're filling out library card applications. They're seeing how the library is relevant to them and it's really coming at it in ways that I feel are often very culturally relevant, linguistically appropriate and it's not just happening in this 36 person classroom. We do events that bring in 200 people for a full day conference. We use our main lobby to do a food from the archives event where we have 19 area institutions everyone from the Barnes Foundation to the Penn Museum coming in and sharing materials from their collections that have to do with food and It's happening right there for everyone to be able to engage with. So...and there's a touch point that then leads to all of these other places that people can learn from.

Elizabeth: Definitely. So do you see a lot of returning patrons?

Liz: Yes. I call, particularly for our evening classes, I call them our Superfans. We have people who have figured out what a great deal it is to you know spend \$5 on a class where they're learning 4 different ways to cook tofu. And they're coming for everything. So we see our return customers. We are also every time seeing new people and we're capturing that you know, finding out how people learn about our program with surveys for our evening classes.

Elizabeth: How do people find out about them?

Liz: From the website, from...we have a newsletter that goes out roughly once a month. We have a social media presence so people are finding us that way. Um and then also word of mouth. So our Superfans are spreading the word and um and inviting new people in.

Elizabeth: So do you have partnerships with the public schools in Philly?

Liz: We do. We have a program that we created a long with a local food educator, [Shayna Marmar of HoneyPie Cooking](#), who she, along with our librarians here, we created a curriculum called Nourishing Literacy and it is geared towards students in grades K through 6. Where we are connecting hands on kitchen lesson to standards, academic standards, health standards, and to a culinary skill. And so we have created activities that the teachers and lessons that teachers can do in their classroom before and after they come to the kitchen. And then we have a whole lesson that they do here in the culinary literacy center. So it's everything from you know learning about different plant parts and it's we do thinks about how cooking is science and learn that through pickling and fermenting while reinforcing how important it is to wash your hands. And then we also have a lesson for the older kids that talks about the faces of food systems and all of the people who touch your food along the way from the ground to your plate.

Elizabeth: That's really cool! So this is I have this sort of a two-part question. What do you see as Philadelphia's most pressing problem or issue when it comes to food literacy and access? And then how can libraries and librarians sort of help address that in ways that others institutions cannot?

Liz: Yeah! Suzanna, take it away.

Suzanna: Honestly I do feel like in answering this question often the onus falls on us as librarians to constantly remind ourselves as we plan programs that we need to be getting input from our participants. And really approaching potential programs with the mindset that every neighborhood has core strengths that there is knowledge within every single person about you know their preferred diet whether its around cultural relevancy or a particular palate. And that we really need to be starting form there.

Because I think when it comes to food education there is sometimes a tendency to finger wag. And I mean I'm a mom and I know that I do it with my kids so I'm not um not including myself in that category. But I think that one thing that I love about our best classes here is that the experience around food for anyone of any age has to be enjoyable, it has to be fun. And it can't feel onerous and you know something that you're doing because your doctor is saying that you have to make certain choices. That's my constant reminder to myself in terms of doing my best work is to take that strengths based approach and really listen to Philadelphia as a whole and notice all of the differences that exist from family to family, from neighborhood to neighborhood, and really try to provide programming that honors those differences.

Liz: And I think that one of the things that we offer as the Free Library and that positions us well to address issues around food literacy is that this city loves its libraries. People trust the libraries. People see the Free Library branch in their neighborhood as a community center. And so we are in a position where we can offer programming based on that foundation of trust. And respect and I see it more

as you know in working inside the community, we're not coming from the outside telling you what you're doing wrong. It's we are there already it's not a we're not a new face even if this type of programming is somewhat new.

Elizabeth: Right yeah. Do you do anything with like urban gardening or gardening programs in Philly?

Liz: So we have a program, a seed swap that's...

Suzanna: Yeah we've been able to partner with the Philadelphia Seed Exchange to offer a number of seed sways. And now the law allows for seed libraries. So we're talking about what that could look like. And it's not something that has to exist in our library system but there is definitely a desire to have that in Philadelphia as a whole. And our last seed swap which we actually had in one of our Northeast locations allowed participants to not just exchange seeds but also partake participate in a skill share around vacant land.

So you know here in Philadelphia again kind of coming at it from a strengths based approach um we have approximately 40,000 vacant lots in Philadelphia that fall under a number of different categories and as you may know, that can often be a challenge in terms of becoming a place where trash gets dumped or cars get abandoned but by the same token to be able to share skills and resources around knowing how to approach those lots so that they can become green spaces or spaces for food production is huge. So we've been able to work with the Garden Justice League to bring all the skills to the table and to be able to facilitate those conversations in really meaningful ways.

Elizabeth: Mhmm, yeah. Do you digitize these resources like are they accessible to people after leaving a workshop like on your website or?

Liz: We are working towards for some of our programs having the curriculum be available for download to be shared, its something that we're aiming for, in particular for Nourishing Literacy once we're finished with that curriculum we want it to be open source. Programs across the board not necessarily but that is a great idea.

Elizabeth: Yeah I was just wondering. I feel like people....At least when I get a handout or something I always like lose it or forget where it is, and I'm like, where is it?

Liz: You're right. We need an archivist!

Suzanna: We've been able to share some recopies but I agree with you, it's neat to kind of learn what would be the most long range way to be able to share those types of resources.

Elizabeth: And it's hard it takes time to like, develop that blog and upload all of that stuff.

Liz: And manpower.

Elizabeth: Yes, exactly.

Liz: Women power!

Elizabeth: There's four of you so I understand. I just want to switch just to what you guys do outside of the library. So I've heard ... we've talked to some librarians in the past who talked about the work-life balance and how that can be really hard to maintain so what are your feelings on that?

Liz: This is another deep sigh for me. I mean I think that this work that we're doing here lies at the intersection of deep personal interest and commitment and our professional interests.

Elizabeth: Exactly.

Liz: And so it is hard to leave this at the door when you go home. Um, Suzanna, Jamie and I we all have young children and so I say that this has been my second baby, the Culinary Literacy Center, falling in between my other two kids. And so work-life balance? I don't know, I mean, it's hard! It's particularly hard as a working parent when you have two parents who work and then you know I think it's just making sure that to compartmentalize as much as possible. Um that when you walk in the door at night then you have to sort of flip the switch and it's something we've all sort of struggled with. We've moved towards being available more than we should on our personal time. And that's my resolution for 2017, it's on my agenda for the next staff meeting is to you know respect personal time. And so yeah, I think it's...work life balance is tricky, man! It's a hard thing to do in this field I think in general.

Suzanna: I think it's difficult but I also feel very grateful sometimes to have a 9-5 job that if I really do compartmentalize doesn't have to be something that I take home. I think of us often as ad hoc educators who don't have to do lesson planning or grading at home. And for that, I'm very grateful. And I think that generally speaking at the Free Library there is a culture of leaving work at work. And that is you know I think that is very valuable....it's a very valuable standard for us to hold ourselves to.

Elizabeth: Do you find that that's unique to the Free Library of Philadelphia or not as widespread?

Liz: I don't know if I can say...um...

Suzanna: I just think about our teacher friends and colleagues who do take work home and that's obviously then they have summers off in the end that's just not the life for me.

Elizabeth: Yeah, I guess other libraries that you've worked in, were they similar?

Liz: When I was in New Jersey it was similar. But I think it's different being in a city that the unions are like really strong and vocal and it's something that I'm proud of being here in this city. So it's you know they're a bit of a force.

Elizabeth: Yeah.

Liz: And I like that.

Elizabeth: Do you guys cook, like, outside of work is that one of your hobbies that you guys enjoy?

Liz: Totally! We all also love to cook and that's one of the things that really relaxes me. Even still I go home and it is relaxing to cook. We all love to cook and we love to cook together here when we have the opportunity to we do a bit of a family meal it'd be lying if we didn't use this beautiful space to do team building ourselves and so um yes to cooking.

Elizabeth: Yeah, that's awesome!

Liz: And eating! that's a big perk of this job!

Elizabeth: One of my final questions is...so this podcast is called Beyond the Stacks different careers outside of the traditional library space in what ways do you guys see your know traditional training traditional librarian skills coming into play and what ways do you see it expanding the library space?

Suzanna: I guess I'll just start by saying that you know I began this interview by referencing my experience of being a child and dealing with the quintessential mean librarian but I honestly feel like being with the free library for about 10 years now I think it's a very demanding job. The time that one spends on a reference desk is not easy and yet it can often be misinterpreted but there's something so incredible about having a climate controlled public space that in which we're mandated to really serve everyone equally. And really allow people to access information in many ways on their own terms where, you know we're not bringing the lesson to them they're bringing their need, their desire to us and we are addressing it in that way. And so I think that those same qualities while we no longer are on a traditional reference desk translate to the work that we do here where you know we're constantly trying to get feedback, informally and formally, on the kinds of classes we can be offering in this space and beyond because really in this fiscal year we're starting to bring culinary programming out into the neighborhood libraries 54

locations and so that's you know an added challenge but once again this opportunity of expanding the idea of what library services and resources could and should be about.

And, you know, it's not just been the public that's been very excited about this but our fellow colleagues who have really been welcoming. I had the opportunity last week to do a staff development training and workshop with a food educator. Um so we had 40 odd library staff from all levels talking about how to prepare a healthy lunch and that's, you know, a challenge for just about every working person no matter what their career may be. But it really allows us to support one another in a way that honestly library school didn't teach me to do that but again in terms of thinking about what we want the library to be - it's there. And you know working in a library can be stressful so we might as well really help one another make this experience as positive as possible.

Liz: And I think too you know just the concept of programming which is such a big part of public librarianship that carries over a lot to what we do. And that you know we need to remember that this is not a cooking school that this is a kitchen classroom in a library and how do we connect what we're doing here to the resources that the free library has to offer, that's a big thing that carries over from more traditional public librarianship roles.

And I think too you know I look back to my YA Programming Materials class that I had in library school and one of the things that I definitely take from that I... my teacher Kimberly Paone who is like a big YALSA guru and she just called people and like had them show up to class I'll never forget David Levitan and John Green came to our class at Rutgers because Kimberly called them and said, can you come talk to these future librarians? And so that's something that I take with me like we can just call people and ask them to come and so you know we reach out to these fancy chefs in Philadelphia and say do you want to come cook with 8th grade students from our neighborhood school and by and large people say yes. So for me it's...that's something that carries over just remembering what the weight of librarianship and the esteem it carries and you can like do a program and remember that you are the library and that means something.

Elizabeth: Right yeah. Do you have any advice for people in my position like current library school students or recent graduates something you wish you had known in school?

Liz: Um I think my advice is to get out there and do practical time like get into a library and get experience. I love all of the theory of the things that you learn in library school. I remember being so jazzed about human information behavior and like look at all of these things study about the way people look for things and searching and ahhhh! But more practical was the time I spent in my traineeship like learning how to translate that beautiful theory into like when this person is front of you and has a real question how do you answer that. And so my advice is to get into

a library and learn as much as you can on the ground, that that will really serve you well.

Suzanna: Amen!

Elizabeth: So is there anything else you'd like to mention about the culinary literacy center or you'd like to talk about? Any final words?

Suzanna: I'd love to invite your listeners to come and visit!

Elizabeth: Yeah!

Suzanna: You don't need a free library card. We've had people come from other states and check out classes that we offer. I think it's a great opportunity to see what we're doing and give us feedback and give us a chance to learn about what your listeners are up to as well.

Elizabeth: Yeah! Definitely.

Liz: And I think too just to close I would encourage students or recent graduates to really think outside the box and to know that, you know, there's so much that you can do as a librarian. If you have or if you work for a system or a library that um you know supports a wacky idea that you can do so much you don't need to be hampered by some old school definitions of what it means to be a librarian. If you can dream it up and find somebody to throw you a little bit of cash at it there's very little you can't accomplish.

Elizabeth: Yeah. Where can we follow you guys on social media?

Liz: Sure! We are on Instagram, our handle is @freelibrarycook. We are on facebook/freelibrarycook. Sometimes we Tweet, @freelibrarycook. Our website is freelibrary.org/cook. If you want to know more about how we did this, I recently did a webinar through Web Junction through OCLC's....so you check that out too. It's an hour of me talking if you haven't gotten enough yet.

Elizabeth: Was it grant supported at the beginning, and it still is or...?

Liz: So the four positions here are city funded, we are all city employees. But the programming budget comes from a combination of revenue from our catered events, private donations, grants and corporate sponsorships. And let's...what is culinary literacy?

Suzanna: Well simply put - literacy through cooking and cooking through literacy.

Elizabeth: Thank you so much! This was so cool to learn about this space, thank you for talking to me.

Liz: Thanks for coming!

Suzanna: Thank you!