

Notable Transcript Awards



(Picture: Liz Paulus, Adult Services Librarian/Web Services at Cedar Mill Library)
On May 6th, Oregon's statewide virtual reference service, [Answerland](#), recognized Liz Paulus at Cedar Mill Library for her excellent virtual reference work while staffing the service in October 2021. Liz was nominated for the Notable Transcript Award. The Notable Transcript Award gives Oregon librarians the opportunity to nominate their colleagues for providing quality virtual reference service. Nominations are reviewed by the Answerland Quality Team. The Quality Team is made up of volunteer librarians from around Oregon and the United States. Each nomination requires a transcript of the virtual conversation between a library patron asking a question and a librarian providing them with information and assistance. These nominations are then evaluated by the Answerland Quality Team against the [quality standards](#) that librarians aspire to achieve with each chat session.

This year's winning transcript nomination began with a question from college student. The college student was looking for some help finding

peer-reviewed sources about vaccines within the last year. This student had questions about “how they work, effectiveness, past successes and failures, and hesitancy” regarding vaccines. Right away, Liz validated the patron's own attempts to find information on their own by asking about where they had looked already. Then she proceeded to ask clarifying questions.

Liz learned that the student needed five total credible sources to complete their research paper. The student was frustrated, noting that all the sources they tried to look at through EBSCOhost “seemed to be too dated.” Liz explained that the older articles did have relevant information on vaccine technology. She noted with the exception of a recent tweak to the vaccine process involving mRNA, the process was the same. Liz then walked the patron through the tricky topic of current study information versus the peer-review process. She noted how the information may be reliable but not technically peer reviewed from the past year. She did an outstanding job of making sure that the patron understood each part of the search process and application of the information in their paper. With gusto, Liz then invited the student to come along on the journey to find the needed information.

At the end of this instruction, Liz reiterated the steps to make a research appointment at their home institution. She also opened a ticket in the Answerland system so librarians at the student's college would know reach out to them. She made a final offer for any more help to verify that the patron's needs had been met and they had enough information to get started on their assignment.

The Quality Team is impressed with Liz's work with this patron from start to finish. She asked clarifying questions throughout the interaction; she had a welcoming tone; she asked follow-up questions to make sure that the patron understood her and that the patron's needs were met. It can be hard not to dump a lot of information on students, but Liz did a great job of breaking down new information into easily digestible chunks without complicated lingo. She also ensured that the interaction would be followed up so the patron's question could be fully answered. Liz also demonstrated excellent virtual reference service when she taught the patron how to make a research appointment request and empowered the patron to make decisions about incorporating many types of credible sources in their paper.

As an expression of our gratitude, Liz was presented with a gift of appreciation and a certificate in a small surprise ceremony organized between Answerland Coordinator Jennifer Cox and Cedar Mill Library staff.

Please join us in congratulating her!
The Answerland Quality Team
Valerie Florez, Answerland Volunteer
Heidi Senior, University of Portland
Alissa Renales, Answerland Volunteer
Clare Sobotka, Answerland Volunteer