Profile: Tiina Payson  
Branch Manager, Edmonton Public Library

How long have you been working in libraries?

Fourteen years.

What was your first job?

As a high school student for my summer job: Personal care assistant in a Nursing Home. After graduating from university with my BSc I became a Faunal Analyst (identifying animal bone remains from archeological sites).

Describe your first library job.

Seventeen years and four children later I received my MLIS and became a part time reference librarian in a public library branch. It was in this job that I found my passion for public librarianship, in particular the joys of customer service, collection development, readers' advisory and the provision of information services. Though my first ever library work takes me back to my volunteer hours in the school library when I was in Grade 7.

If you weren't a librarian/library worker, what would you be and why?

Perhaps a psychologist or social worker. I love working with people, helping connect them with the resources they need in their lives, enabling people to
discover a greater sense of self worth, connecting them to the community they live and work in.

**What do you like best about your current job?**

As a manager, I love to help my staff become the best they can be and to facilitate their work environment so they are able to work their best. I have many opportunities to work as a librarian as well, helping everyone and anyone to find what makes their heart sing and fills their knowledge gap. Community development and relationship building with other social services providers also brings great excitement to my job. I am very fortunate to work in an environment that encourages innovation, questioning, and personal growth.

**Describe your favorite conference experience.**

This is a difficult question to answer since I find all conferences offer so many opportunities for learning. Each conference has had an impact on how I approach my job by offering opportunities to improve my understanding of librarianship from either practical or theoretical points of view.

**What do you do for fun?**

Gardening, birding, hiking, felt art, reading.

**Name one person you admire, and explain why you admire them.**

Dalai Lama - for his incredible sense of humour, his endless compassion, his brilliant insight into human nature, his acceptance of the diversity and variability of humanity.

**If you could say one thing to someone who is interested in a career in libraries, what would it be?**

It is the love of people and helping or teaching people, not the love of books that is paramount.

**If you were stranded at the airport, what would you want to have with you to read, and why?**

My favourite airport reading is magazines because they offer such a great variety of topics from many different viewpoints. Some of my favourites are: Scientific American, Utne, Atlantic Monthly, Discover, Walrus, New Yorker, Equinox, and Beaver.