

Librarian's Shelf by Brad Hruska

### "The Perfect Escape"

This year has been fast-paced and exciting for my family and me. We moved into a new home, my children started attending a new school, my wife began a new teaching position, and the Columbus Public Library (CPL) hired a new library director, Drew Brookhart, to help progress the library in to the future!

With so much NEW going on around us, my bride and I tried to make the transitions fun and less intense for our children. One of the ways we accomplished this goal was by making regular trips to the library to check out books featuring familiar characters like Fancy Nancy, Llama Llama, Big Nate, Judy Moody, Stink, and Spiderman.

Personally, I find comfort in nature and animals, which should be of no surprise to anyone who has visited the Children's Room of CPL since it is home to various fish, birds, and even a turtle named Yertle. When I look for books to help me relax I am often drawn to texts like "Dogboy" by Christopher Russell, "The Magician's Elephant" by Kate Dicamillo, "The Familiars" by Andrew Jacobson, and "Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH" by Robert O'Brien. One of the recent books I sought refuge in during this busy chapter of my life was "The Secret Zoo" by Bryan Chick.

In this novel, readers meet Noah, a young lad who is on a mission to find his missing sister Meg. Many in the community were determined to find her; however, after a year of searching, people began to give up hope of ever seeing again. But that changed one evening when a small bird flew through Noah's open bedroom window. The feathered creature flew about for some time but eventually made its way out the window from which it came. After rushing to shut the window, Noah notices a tiny sheet of folded paper in the middle of his tidy bedroom floor. When Noah unfolds the paper, he realizes that it is from his sister's diary. The young man thinks it a bit strange; however, he dismisses it as coincidence. But when another creature comes knocking on Noah's window with yet another portion of Meg's diary, the lad takes notice and embarks on an adventure, which leads him and his friends from the Action Scouts to a secret zoo within his hometown's city zoo. To discover if Noah is able to locate his beloved sibling or if all of this is just a wild goose chase, check out Chick's book, "The Secret Zoo."

And remember, if things are a bit crazy in your neck of the woods; take the opportunity to visit places that can offer peace and stability like the Columbus Public Library. I guarantee you will find reads that will provide you with the needed escape from the fast-paced rush of life. If you have any questions about the books mentioned, please feel free to contact me at (402) 564-7116 opt. 4, and from my family to yours, have safe and blessed New Year!