

Recipient of Illinois Library Association's 2022 Librarian of the Year Award **Relies on Follett Destiny for Ease, Efficiency**



RHONDA JENKINS

Library Media Center Director
Kendall Elementary School
Naperville, IL

When notified of being named the Illinois Library Association's 2022 Librarian of the Year, Jenkins was "incredibly honored," as the award recognizes a librarian's distinguished service and leadership in Illinois libraries.

Between creating impressive book displays, mentoring her colleagues, and keeping up with rapidly changing technology, Rhonda needs tools that will help her simplify her day. She turns to Follett Destiny® Library Manager for that reason. "There is so much that Destiny does to help me save time and money. In just about a blink of an eye, once-difficult tasks are done!"



An educator for nearly 25 years, Jenkins has been in her current position for 10 years, the same amount of time she has been a devoted user of Follett Destiny® Library Manager. She is grateful to her district for embracing the market-leading solution because some of her peers in other districts operate without it. **“They can’t do some of the things we take for granted because it’s built into Destiny,”** she observes.



When asked which Destiny features she thinks are most essential for her and the district’s team of librarians, Jenkins replied, **“I could go on forever!”** But she did take time to list some of her favorite features:

- Collections by Destiny®
- The ability to make lists, both private and shared, with the whole district
- The volume of reports that can be run
- Checkouts and check-ins
- Follett Destiny Discover®, the discovery interface for both students and educators
- Notifications for late books
- Cataloging
- Offline circulation

Moreover, when it comes time for her to create her annual infographic that provides a snapshot of the year completed, Jenkins says Destiny is a treasure chest of information. **“Statistics are so easy to find for books checked out, the most popular books, newest books added, weeded books, lost books, and more,”** she notes.

It was no surprise to anyone, except Jenkins, when she was nominated for the Illinois Library Association’s 2022 Librarian of the Year Award. Her nominator and colleague, Natalie Hoyle Ross, Library Media Center Director for Spring Brook Elementary School, also in Naperville, wrote, **“Rhonda Jenkins is an exemplary school librarian who has created and promotes an outstanding library program and inspires other school librarians to raise the bar of performance.”**

And how did Destiny play a role in Jenkins winning her state’s Library Association award, which recognizes a librarian’s distinguished service and leadership in Illinois libraries? “Ms. Jenkins’ efforts lift school librarians in Illinois and beyond, helping others become better librarians, ultimately resulting in more students who love to learn and read, assisted by technology,” continued Ross.

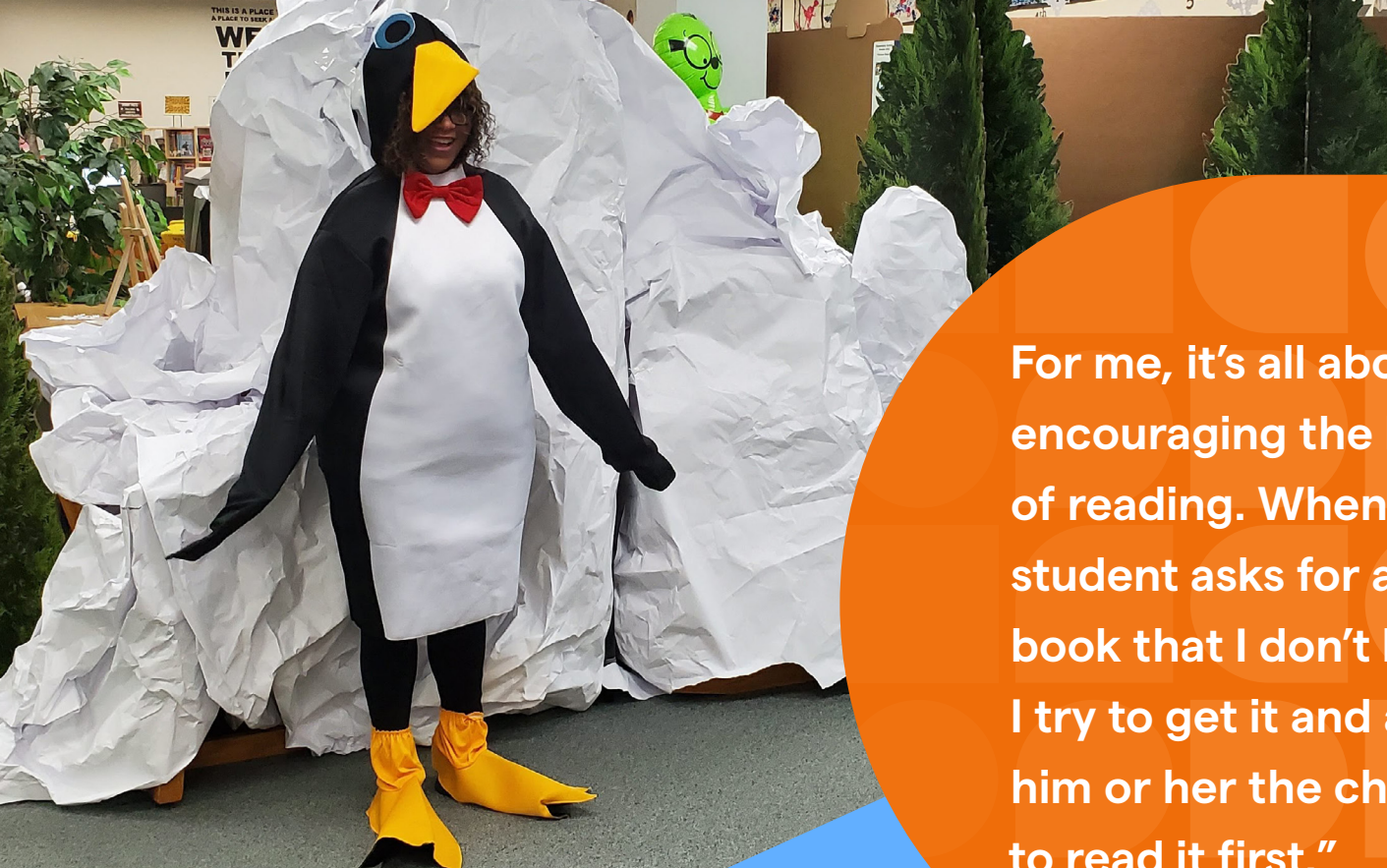
“I LIKE THE EASY BUTTON. WHEN I CAN FIND A WAY TO MAKE WHAT WE DO EASIER, I’LL CREATE A VIDEO AND SHARE IT WITH MY COLLEAGUES,” JENKINS SAYS. “I’M ALWAYS WILLING TO SHARE WHAT I FIND TO MAKE OUR LIVES EASIER.”

Her colleagues have taken notice. In the nomination form, Ross wrote that Jenkins **“shares ideas with other school librarians in her district and 6,000-plus Twitter followers, volunteers through AISLE (Association of Illinois School Library Educators) to boost school librarianship in Illinois, and presents ideas both face-to-face and virtually on the national circuit. With her high profile, she promotes the importance and joy of librarianship.”**

With her elevated profile, in September 2020, Jenkins was asked to be the featured school librarian on a Book Joy

Live segment with Jeff Kinney, author of the popular Diary of a Wimpy Kid children’s book series. And a big part of the joy that Jenkins enjoys spreading is the art of what she likes to call “connecting.”





For me, it's all about encouraging the love of reading. When a student asks for a book that I don't have, I try to get it and allow him or her the chance to read it first."

"I love connecting students to books. I love it when they read something that I've recommended, and they cannot wait to share their thoughts with me," said Jenkins, who has also been an elementary classroom teacher as well as a high school reading specialist. "For me, it's all about encouraging the love of reading. When a student asks for a book that I don't have, I try to get it and allow him or her the chance to read it first."

While she is devoted to her students, she also is a champion of her fellow librarians.

"I hope librarians can continue to be recognized as information gurus in the school," Jenkins stresses. "We can help with so many aspects of learning and reading. I further hope our value in a building will not change and that when changes are afoot, we are included in the conversations. I hope all school districts keep or bring back their librarians."

Rhonda Jenkins is a friendly school librarian. She has a passion for nurturing young minds and fostering a love of reading. She is dedicated to creating an inspiring and enriching library environment and is currently a Library Media Center Director in a Grades K-5 building in Naperville, Illinois. She has been a teacher for 24 years. When she's not at work, she's still surrounded by books because she is an avid reader. She's a computer geek, a crafter, and a lover of languages. She has a creative soul and 22 great-nieces and great-nephews! She has one daughter who is absolutely her best friend.

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