

Linda Johns won the WLA Scholarship in 2004. Today, she is a Reader's Advisory Librarian (Fiction Department) for The Seattle Public Library. She is also a writer and has had seven children's books published (including the Hannah West mystery series). Here's what she had to say:

- **What has surprised/delighted you most about becoming a librarian?**

As a former bookseller, I already knew how much I love that magical moment of connecting a reader with the right book at the right time. But I had no idea how much deeper the personal connection to readers could be until I began working in a library, doing readers advisory and being a part of a community.

- **How did the scholarship help you?**

My son was in elementary school and I worked full-time as an editor when I was in library school. The WLA scholarship gave me some room to breathe -- I cut my working hours down to 30 per week, concentrated more on graduate school and managed to not be a stressed out mess for that second year of MLIS studies. The WLA funds meant less debt, and that's a huge relief. Two added benefits were getting involved in WLA and going to my first WLA conference. The connections I made through WLA when I was still a grad student were pretty incredible.

- **What can you say to encourage folks to support the scholarship?**

I need to give to the scholarship! You know, we need to keep this scholarship opportunity open to those who are coming into the profession. This scholarship truly encourages new librarians who come from diverse professional backgrounds. There are so many graduate students who are juggling full-time jobs, families, and the demands of switching to a new profession. All of their rich experiences make them wonderful additions to the field of librarianship, and if we can recognize these up-and-coming librarians – and make their lives a little easier – it only serves to strengthen our profession.