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**Janette Derucki:** Hi. Welcome back to *Can't Shelve This*, the podcast where we hammer home the importance of school libraries. I'm Janette Derucki, and I'm joined by my co-host, Leah Gregory.

**Leah Gregory:** Hello.

**Janette:** And our podcast producer, Ola Gronski.

**Ola Gronski:** Hi, everyone.

**Janette:** First things first, we have some really exciting things to talk about at *Can't shelve This*. Some great happenings. I want to congratulate my co-host, Leah, for being named to the *Library Journal's* Movers and Shakers. Way to go. Very well deserved, Leah.

**Leah:** Thank you very much. It's very exciting. I feel very embarrassed. I feel like I'm blushing. [laughs]

**Janette:** Embarrassed? I was going to ask if you were surprised by that.

**Leah:** I've known for quite some time, but I was surprised when I got the notification, so much so that I reported it as a scam [laughter] when I got the email. When I got the email, I'm like, oh yeah, this is a scam. Then I said it to Kate, and she goes, "Oh," she goes, "You didn't delete it, did you? Go back and get it. That is true." [laughs]

**Janette:** Leah's co-worker, Kate, is the one who nominated her. I was looped into that process because she asked me if I would support the nomination, and of course, I would, because you're amazing. You're doing amazing things.

**Ola:** You're just like, "No, actually, I can't condone this."

**Leah: “**Absolutely not.” [laughs]

**Janette:** I was like, "Here's a five-point essay as to why Leah does not deserve this award." No. Of course, I was like, yes, absolutely. I saw your nomination before she sent it in. It was very glowing and well-deserved. All great points. You do such amazing things.

**Leah:** You do.

**Janette:** We can't say enough good things about you. Well deserved. I'm glad you didn't delete it.

**Leah:** [laughs] I was convinced. I did eventually read Kate's letter, and it made me cry. Then I decided the best part out of all of it-- Obviously, it's an honor to be named a Mover and Shaker by the *Library Journal*, and obviously, it's a respected publication, and I am blown away that they selected me, but I'm more touched that the people around me felt that I deserved it. You know what I mean?

**Ola:** I noticed that your little tagline is the Librarian's Librarian, which I love.

**Leah:** I didn't create that, they came up with that.

**Ola:** Really?

**Leah:** I'm like, that could not be more perfect, honestly.

**Ola:** I love it so much. I was next to Janette when I read the article, and I was like, why am I tearing up about this, and I have goosebumps? [laugher]

**Janette:** So perfect.

**Ola:** It is so wonderful.

**Leah:** I was happy because it highlights how much of a collaboration all the work I do is, because obviously, here you guys are.

**Janette:** There is a shout-out to the podcast in the article.

**Leah:** Yes, there is.

**Janette:** I was like, Leah, aw. I was very touched.

**Ola:** That was very sweet of you to do.

**Leah:** Oh, no, no, she asked me, "What am I most excited about right now?" Obviously, it's the podcast, it's my favorite thing to do.

**Janette:** That's sweet.

**Ola:** I've trained her well as her producer. No.

[laughter]

**Janette:** You're about to be joined by a fellow Mover and Shaker, one of our guests today, but we'll get to that in a little bit. I just want to check in with everybody. We talk a lot about our reading, and what we're reading, and how's everything going? Are you reading anything good that you want to share?

**Ola:** I'm actually reading the new Emily Henry, which is always a delight. A Big Beautiful Life?

**Leah:** *Great Big Beautiful Life*. Just finished it.

**Ola:** Did you?

**Leah:** Yes.

**Janette:** Oh, nice.

**Ola:** I love a grumpy love interest.

**Leah:** So do I.

**Ola:** When the guy is just always grimacing, and he's like a sad little puppy.

**Leah:** What I love about the book is they obviously become friends, and the grumpy guy realizes there is a conflict of interest there, and he's really, really trying to do the right thing. I just really respect a guy that does the right thing. I loved it.

**Ola:** Don't we all? [laughs]

**Janette:** I love that kind of tension in a book, though, where it's this forbidden aspect, but it's not taboo forbidden. You're like, come on, you can do it. It's okay. Just break the rules. I'm such a rule follower in real life, but literally, in every book, I'm like, break the rules. It's okay. See, this is why books are a safe space to experience things you don't experience in real life.

**Ola:** That's so true. I've talked about this before, but I just love the way Emily Henry creates and writes her characters. They always feel very real and genuine. The main character-- of course, I just started this book, so I don't even remember anyone's name.

**Leah:** Alice. She's Alice, isn't she?

**Ola:** Alice.

**Leah:** Yes.

**Ola:** She's just so bright, bubbly, happy, positive-thinking, and so next to that character. It's just fun to see, I love when they don't back down. They don't shrink just because they're around a person who is not that way. She stays true to herself. I just-

**Janette:** It's empowering.

**Ola:** -Emily Henry, you did it again.

**Leah:** Yes. She did it. I always am afraid when a new Emily Henry comes out. I'm like, is this going to be the one? So far, she is holding strong.

**Janette:** Every once in a while, you do have a favorite author, though, that does put out a book that you're like, hm, this one didn't really hit with me.

**Leah:** Not my favorite.

**Ola:** So far, so good. I did hear, and maybe this will be exciting for the Swifties out there. My sister-in-law told me that I think this book is inspired by the song on Taylor Swift's newer album, what is it, The Great American Dynasty or something like that? That Emily Henry listened to that song, and it just sparked this idea, and she wrote the whole book-

**Janette:** That's so cool.

**Ola:** -inspired by that. Don't know if it's true, but I will fact check.

**Janette:** It's a good rumor if it's not.

**Leah:** I've been reading a lot of Paige Toon, and a lot of her newer books have the playlist in the back, which I love.

**Ola:** Oh, I love when they do that.

**Janette:** I do, too. I love a good reading playlist, because sometimes-- This is going to date myself a little bit, but when the *Twilight* books were coming out and Stephanie Meyer was putting playlists in her books, and that's when I realized, like, she's a Muse fan. I was a Muse fan. I was just like, oh.

**Leah:** It was meant to be.

**Janette:** It was like, we're the same person except I didn't write these best-selling multimillion-dollar books, but-- [laughs]

**Ola:** Almost, right? Almost.

**Leah:** Kind of like this podcast is very, very similar to *New Heights.*

[laughter]

**Janette:** Right. If this podcast is like *New Heights*, which Kelce brother are you, and which Kelce brother am I? Your answer will be judged.

**Leah:** Oh, my gosh.

**Janette:** The reason I ask this is because Leah always says in every celebrity brother pair, I like the less popular brother.

**Ola:** It's so true.

**Janette:** You know what? I could probably date this back to my childhood. I did always root for the underdog, the least popular person in any kind of group on television, or-- I always liked the drummer in the band, never the lead singer, those kinds of things. I guess I am drawn to that kind of character in a group.

**Ola:** Except for your opinion on the ranking of famous Chrises.

**Janette:** True.

**Ola:** In that one, you surprised me because you picked the most objectively attractive guy.

**Janette:** Here's my ranking of the famous Chrises. It makes me sound like such a terrible, horrible person, but if I had to rank the four famous Chrises-- The four famous Chrises are Chris Evans, Chris Pine, Chris Pratt, and Chris Hemsworth. That's like a--

**Ola:** Objectively, those are the famous Chrises.

**Janette:** It's like that's well known. Those are the Chrises. I pick Hemsworth, Pine, Evans, Pratt. That's my order. I don't think it's controversial. Chris Hemsworth is--

**Leah:** No, I think she's the non-controversial one here.

**Ola:** I think it's controversial for you.

**Leah:** Yes.

**Janette:** Oh, you expected me to have a different order.

**Leah:** Yes.

**Ola:** I did.

**Janette:** To not go with-- It goes against the grain of my preferences, but I think when you look at-- I tend to reject things that are high on the hype cycle, so there goes Chris Evans. Chris Pratt is just not my favorite. He's been in movies I don't really enjoy. He's not-- I mean, whatever. He is at the bottom by default. Then it's hard for me, because Chris Hemsworth and Chris Pine, they are-- People are going to be like, "Why do you spend this much time thinking about this?" [laughter] Chris Pine is very much an intellectual. If you see him, pictures of him, he's like, oh, he's got books, and he's very smart. That--

**Ola:** Except right now, he's in his eccentric--He looks like The Dude from *Big Lebowski*. That's the kind of vibe he's giving right now.

**Janette:** He's in a little bit of a mad scientist phase, I think.

**Leah:** Yes, he is.

**Ola:** I'm really here for it. I love it.

**Janette:** Chris Hemsworth, on his social media, his persona that he projects, it shows a lot of environmental values and things like that.

**Ola:** Very wholesome.

**Janette:** Which aligns very much with my own personal values. I feel like that also-- not going to lie, I'm 5'8", so I'm always drawn to a taller guy in general. I feel like that also.

**Leah:** I think Ola and I both agree on our favorite Chris, wasn't it?

**Ola:** Yes.

**Leah:** I do love Chris Hemsworth, but Chris Pine is my favorite. I would rank him number one. I don't know why, I think I've just seen more movies that I liked of his. Also, you guys, this is how old I am. I loved his dad.

**Janette:** Oh, yes.

**Ola:** He's a nepo baby?

**Leah:** Yes.

**Janette:** Yes, very much so.

**Ola:** I had no idea.

**Janette:** Do you likethe *Star Trek* Chris Pine or just the newer--

**Ola:** That was my introduction to loving Chris Pine.

**Leah:** I like all of Chris Pine. I loved him in *Wonder Woman*.

**Janette:** Leah, the way you just said, "I like all of Chris Pine." Well, okay, then.

**Leah:** I like all of Chris Pine's body of work. There we go.

[laughter]

**Janette:** Do not say the word body in that sentence.

**Leah:** Okay, I like most of Chris Pine's movies. There we go. [laughs] I loved him in *Wonder Woman*. I hated the second *Wonder Woman*, but I loved the first *Wonder Woman*.

**Ola:** I can interchange Hemsworth and Evans. I think depending on what they're in.

**Leah:** Oh, no, no. I definitely prefer Hemsworth to Evans.

**Ola:** So, the Jonas Brothers.

**Janette:** Oh, controversial.

**Ola:** Using your logic, Janette, is Kevin your favorite?

**Janette:** I do feel for Kevin. I feel like he's a solid part of the group that gets overlooked, because he was never really like the fan favorite, right?

**Ola:** For sure.

**Janette:** You had Nick and Joe back and forth for a while. It was all Joe. Then I feel like Nick took the reins when he went solo. Honestly, my favorite Jonas is the bonus Jonas, Frankie.

**Ola:** Frankie? I was going to say.

**Leah:** I don't even know who the bonus Jonas is.

[laughter]

**Ola:** As a youngest child, by a lot of years, I feel for Frankie. We are often forgotten. [laughs]

**Janette:** There are so many famous brother pairs that you know of that have a third brother that you just don't really hear about.

**Ola:** The Hemsworths have a third brother, right?

**Janette:** Yes, they have other brother. Luke and Owen Wilson I think have a third brother.

**Ola:** No way.

**Janette:** If you think about sports, I know you guys love sports, the Mannings, there's a third Manning brother, too-

**Leah:** Third brother, yes.

**Janette:** -but no one talks about.

**Leah:** Oh, it must be terrible to be the third brother when both other brothers are famous. [laughs] It'd be terrible.

**Janette:** The third Manning brother is about to get talked about because he's Arch Manning's dad. Arch Manning now plays for the University of Texas. He's their quarterback. He's expected to be-

**Ola:** Sports nepo babies.

**Janette:** -the next big thing. Of course, there's a million of those.

**Ola:** Nepo babies are so fascinating to me.

**Janette:** What other brothers? We want to go into the Skarsgårds. We'll revive that.

**Ola:** We know where I stand. No.

**Leah:** We all know where we stand on Skarsgårds.

**Ola:** Oh, the Culkins.

**Janette:** Oh.

**Leah:** Oh, yes. We went to the Culkins for a little while. This is like our listeners’ peek into our group chat.

[laughter]

**Janette:** I'm sure they're riveted.

**Ola:** Kate's like, two times speed, fast forward.

[laughter]

**Janette:** It's the Macaulay versus Kieran Culkin debate. Leah, where do you stand?

**Leah:** Macaulay, but I love the little one. Who was it? Was it Kieran that played Spencer in *Home Alone*?

**Ola:** Yes, that's Kieran.

**Leah:** Where he got smashed up against the wall?

**Ola:** Yes.

**Leah:** I loved him in that. I love Macaulay. I like that he went off the rails. I love that he's married to Brenda Song.

**Ola:** London Tipton. They've been married for a long time. I'm really rooting for them. Although, Janette, you are once again, forgetting a forgotten brother. There is Rory Culkin-

**Janette:** Yes, true.

**Ola:** -who I do love. I saw him in one movie, and I was like, yep. Although Kieran is raising to the top.

**Janette:** I also feel like Rory Culkin is the brother that no one talks about. He's the third brother, even though he's famous in his own right. I feel like Kieran Culkin, maybe it's because he's so funny. He just has that quirky personality. He almost just doesn't care. He's like, "This is who I am. I'm going to be me. I'm not going to conform."

**Leah:** Exactly.

**Janette:** I do love that.

**Ola:** I think that's why I love Chris Pine doing his little eccentric phase right now, like, own it. I love it.

**Janette:** Not to go back to the Chrises. There was a video clip I saw of him. Paparazzi were taking a picture of him. He was on his bike with some books or something. He was literally yelling at them like, "Leave me alone." [laughs]

**Ola:** We can all relate to that. Right?

**Janette:** Well, I don't get chased by the paparazzi.

**Leah:** No, but I do frequently go, "Leave me alone." [laughter] We have to go back to discussing books for a minute because I have two things to say. First of all, I started reading some Rebecca Yarros books. Have you read anything by her?

**Janette:** Oh, I love Rebecca Yarros.

**Leah:** I'm reading some of her ones. I read *In the Likely Event*. I read three or four in a row. The ones that I was reading were romances, but they were very poignant. Then I read the fourth one called *The Last Letter*. Have you read that one?

**Janette:** Mhm.

**Leah:** Oh my god, Janette. I did not expect that. [laughs] I was personally victimized by this horrible, [laughter] sad story.

**Janette:** It was very sad.

**Leah:** I was expecting a happy ever after, and I did not get it. Oh, I ugly cried. I told Janette that I wanted to make a point to tell everybody that I am crushing my reading goal for the year.

**Ola:** Yay.

**Leah:** I'm 21 books ahead.

**Ola:** That's really impressive. What's your goal?

**Leah:** 50.

**Ola:** Okay.

**Leah:** I'm more than halfway.

**Janette:** Oh, that's really good. That's very good. When I was in library school, and so I was doing schoolwork and reading for that or whatever, but I was reading a lot more just for fun. I would read probably close to 200 books. A lot of them are very short, quick indie reads, things like that. Those still count.

**Leah:** Definitely.

**Janette:** My goal last year was 180, did not hit it. My goal this year, I think is 150. I do also want to say reading goals are completely arbitrary. If you don't hit it, it's okay. I am almost always behind. The fact that I am four books ahead at this point in the year is good. For whatever reason, if I look back through all of my reading history, all my Goodreads goals that I've set-- I always do this, I read a ton in January, February, and maybe it's because it's winter, you're inside. Then it slows down in the middle. Maybe it's because I'm trying to hit my goal so hard at the end that it picks way back up.

**Ola:** Totally normal. It fluctuates.

**Janette:** It's so hard.

**Leah:** I like to set a reading goal pretty low and then smash it, because I feel very accomplished. [laughs]

**Janette:** That makes a lot of sense.

**Leah:** I like to under-promise and over-deliver. It extends to my reading goal.

**Janette:** I feel like we could talk about our reading goals and books all day long, but we should probably get to the episode. That's what the listeners are waiting for. We have a really great episode today to wrap up the first season of *Can't Shelve This*. For one, I just want to say a huge thanks to everyone who's tuned in all season long. Hopefully you'll enjoy this last installment as something special. Today we're so excited to be joined by Oak Lawn-Hometown Middle School librarian Heather McCarthy.

**Heather McCarthy:** Hi, thank you so much for having us today.

**Janette:** And a few of her students were able to join us today. Welcome Emily.

**Emily:** Hi, everyone. Thank you for having me.

**Janette:** And Nathan.

**Nathan:** Hello.

**Janette:** We're so excited that you were all able to join us today. I appreciate your time and being here. I know our listeners are going to be excited to hear from you. We thought it would be great to go to the source. The school libraries are for students. We want to hear their take on the school library and what makes it so important and special for them. I'm going to go ahead and start just with some introductions. Heather, if you wouldn't mind telling us a little bit about yourself and how you got started in school libraries.

**Heather:** It seems like the typical route now when we listen to everybody talking about how they got into the library world. I was a language arts teacher for 20 years, and then moved over into the library world, the best decision ever. I loved being a language arts teacher and using the power of literature to promote empathy and inclusion and do community service and service learning projects.

But I only had access to 90 students as a language arts teacher. Now in the same building, I serve 1,100 sixth, seventh, and eighth graders, so I feel like I can have a bigger impact when I have access to that many students. Plus, I get to do so many cool things. I now have the makerspace and get to teach all the subjects, not just language arts. I really love my job.

**Janette:** That's exciting. We were talking earlier before you joined us about-- that you were, last year, were named a *Library Journal* Mover and Shaker. Congratulations on that.

**Leah:** Congratulations.

**Janette:** Then we also wanted to congratulate you on your recent election to the ILA board.

**Heather:** Oh, thank you so much.

**Janette:** I was so excited to see that. Congrats. Emily, do you mind going, tell us a little bit about yourself and some things that you like to do?

**Emily:** Yes, of course. I'm an eighth grader at OLHMS. I love being a part of the school. I love getting involved. I'm in track, cross country, girls and boys volleyball manager. I play two instruments, I play the clarinet and I play the cello.

**Janette:** Woo. I was a clarinet player, so I'm with you on that.

**Emily:** Oh my goodness, it's such a small world. I love getting involved. I do a lot of community service. I like reading. I like learning.

**Janette:** That's great. Awesome.

**Leah:** It is great.

**Janette:** How about you, Nathan?

**Nathan:** At OLHMS, I'm also an eighth grader. I'm more of a technological kind of guy. I do track, and I like to work with plants. I work a lot with computers, consoles and everything. I also like to do a lot of things. I did IFest. I was the first male dancer for the school for non-traditional dance. We had a failed hydroponics team, but we almost had it working. All of my plants are now dead, but we will be coming back in the summer with new plants.

**Janette:** Tell us a little bit more about a hydroponics team. What is that for anyone who's never been part of one?

**Nathan:** Ms. McCarthy requested for some plants, so I thought, why not? I got some of my friends together, and we got a little hydroponics station. It's like a little watering station. It'll water your plants for you. Keep them alive. Give them a light. It wasn't working one day. We spent, what, three hours working on it, and it failed.

**Janette:** Oh, that's sad.

**Nathan:** Yeah, but I've gone to conventions and sold about $100 worth of plants. They've grown to be real big and grow long down to the floor.

**Janette:** You're like a little entrepreneur in your library.

**Nathan:** Sort of, yeah.

**Janette:** It sounds like you have a lot of opportunities. You're both very involved. I'm really impressed with that. I don't know what you think, Leah. I'm like, I liked to be busy in school, but--

**Leah:** I was not busy in school. I was kind of like a wallflower. I've learned since then that one of the best ways to be enriched is to get involved. I think it's great that you guys are off to an early start. It's great that you have so many opportunities.

**Janette:** Very cool. We like to get our episodes started with-- To ease you into things a little bit, we like to ask you about what it's like for you as a reader. What kind of reader are you? Are you mostly a physical book reader, an e-book reader, or an audiobook reader? I'm going to ask all three of you. For Nathan and Emily, it might be more-- is more dependent on your access, I guess. Heather, I'll start with you. You can talk about your reading habits.

**Heather:** I'm definitely a print reader, hardcover, hold the book in my hand. Then I also keep an audio book on my phone at all times, like if I have a chance for a walk. I feel like nonfiction I can listen to in an audio book, but then everything else, I like to physically hold in my hand. Anything else, I'm just very easily distracted.

**Janette:** I do that a lot. With audio books, I usually have to either be cleaning my house or in my car. Otherwise, it's like I will completely tune out and tune into something else. Then suddenly, it's like two chapters later, and I'm like, I don't even know what's happening in this book. How about you, Nathan? We'll start with you.

**Nathan:** I'm more of just a hard copy reader. I don't like listening. If I do listen to something, it's a podcast, not books. I like only reading with a book in my hand, because if I don't, then I get distracted. Same, I'll be five chapters ahead and I'll be like, let me go back if I’m listening to it.

**Leah:** I'm with you, Nathan. It happens to me all the time.

**Janette:** It's like trying to find the spot where you started to get distracted. You're like, I don't even remember what was happening when I stopped listening.

**Nathan:** Yeah.

**Janette:** How about you, Emily?

**Emily:** I'd have to agree with that. I'm more of a hard copy book type of girl. I need my book. If not, if I'm listening to a podcast, or an audio book, I will get lost on where I'm reading at. I would just lose track and just forget about the whole thing. I have realized more that I like listening to podcasts while I'm doing something chill around the house.

**Janette:** That makes a lot of sense. If you're a walker, things like that, if you're just doing an activity that doesn't require a lot more concentration, it's easier to tune into the podcast, otherwise-- I don't know. There are a lot of people who say they listen to audio books, because they want to be reading while they're doing other things. I'm like, there are very few-

**Leah:** I can't do that.

**Janette:** -other things I can be doing. It sounds like you're all the same way. We're in good company. I appreciate that. I noticed that you're joining us from your podcast studio. First of all, I'm like, how cool that you have a podcast studio.

**Leah:** That is very, very cool.

**Janette:** I was hoping that Nathan and/or Emily could tell us a little bit about your podcast studio and what things you do there. Obviously, podcasts, but what else do you use it for? Do you have a podcast?

**Emily:** I don't personally have a podcast, but during our core classes for ELA, sometimes we come upstairs and roam around the library. I love coming to the podcast studio and just having a nice conversation. We also could make music or have sound effects, make the beat drop. [laughter] It's a really fun time. It's like my favorite part. It's really good. I like it a lot.

**Janette:** How about you, Nathan? Do you get a lot of time in there?

**Nathan:** In the upcoming years, I haven't really. It's more of schoolwork that I have to do. I'm also a music guy. I play almost 10 instruments.

**Leah:** Wow.

**Nathan:** I used to make music in here with some eighth graders at the time, but we would make music, and I would just produce it. We have a little station there. You can change how loud the music is or how loud the mics are. I love doing that.

**Leah:** It's a recording studio/podcast-

**Nathan:** Yeah, it can do both.

**Leah:** -booth.

**Janette:** That's so cool. Tell us more about these 10 instruments. I am intrigued. I was already super impressed with Emily. She's saying she plays the clarinet and the cello, and I'm like, that's amazing. What are your instruments?

**Nathan:** I play tenor saxophone for the school. I also play alto in my free time. I do guitar, acoustic and electric. I do bass guitar. I can also play upright bass. I do drums, piano, and I know a little bit of brass instruments like trumpet, trombone, a little euphonium, a little tuba.

**Janette:** One, I'm impressed that you can play all those instruments. Both of you, though, are playing instruments that require you to read music that's written differently. You have different clefs. It's not as easy as it sounds, maybe.

**Leah:** Even if they played one instrument with one set of music, that's not easy.

**Janette:** Yeah, that's impressive. You all are overachievers, for sure.

**Leah:** Definitely. Heather, how did the podcast studio come about?

**Heather:** I have a buddy that I teach with, Andy Weber. I was a language arts teacher, he was a social studies teacher, and we just-- There's a lot of connections between those two content areas. He's a musician and a singer-songwriter, I am not. We were just thinking of different ways we could incorporate our curriculum together, our classes together. We're like, "We should get a podcast studio." We're very fortunate in our school, we have an education foundation that you can bring any kind of crazy idea to that wouldn't typically be funded through the regular ways, and they'll fund your project for you.

We said we wanted a recording studio. We cleaned out a closet and said, this is a great space, and they fully funded it. Then when I moved to the library, I took the studio with me and put it-- [laughter] I'm taking everything with me. Now we have the studio in here, and it just has grown and flourished now that it's in the library. We have a podcasting club that uses it. Kids also come in here, we have these sound walls, they'll make their green screen videos or their stop motion videos. It's the most popular room in the whole school.

**Leah:** It's multi-purpose, definitely.

**Heather:** Yeah.

**Janette:** I'm assuming the space is much bigger now that it's in the library than it was before.

**Heather:** Yeah. We have the same amount of equipment. We have four mics and a mixer, but we also have a dry erase tables that they can brainstorm on. Then the students, of course, wanted to add ring lights and all sorts of other fun things to enhance their audio and visual movie making that they do in here, and their soundtracks when they're dropping the beat, as Emily said. [laughter]

**Janette:** It's all production quality now.

**Leah:** Absolutely. Yeah.

**Janette:** That's amazing. So cool. I love that they have so much input into it as well. It's all about them. You're trying to find equipment and things that they need to do the things they want to do.

**Heather:** That's pretty much everything in the library is just whatever the kids came up with. Obviously, these two are way smarter than me, and most of the kids are way more creative. Almost everything we have put in our library from drones to VRs to a bearded dragon, it's all what the kids have come up with. They'll just be like, "You know what we need?" Then we just figure out a way to make it happen.

**Janette:** It's great to see what gets them excited because it does change over time, with the different students that cycle through. You've got to constantly be-- That's one of the challenges, I think, of school libraries, is to constantly just be evolving and changing with the students in it. That's so cool. Tell us about this bearded dragon, though. I want to hear more about that.

**Emily:** Sure. We have a bearded dragon. Did we get it in sixth grade? Sixth grade. Yes. My sixth grade year, we got a bearded dragon, and its name is Beans. It was a whole school-wide, like, "What should we name our bearded dragon?" We went in and we took a vote and Beans won. It was such an amazing moment to be able to have a bearded dragon in your school.

**Leah:** This is so funny, because I've actually heard about Beans before. Didn't Ola tell us about Beans when she went and visited?

**Janette:** She did.

**Leah:** Yes. [laughs] As soon as you said that, I'm like, oh, I've heard of Beans.

**Janette:** Beans was one of the highlights of Ola's visit, I think.

**Leah:** Yes.

**Emily:** At first, I was so scared. I was like, no, I'm not going by Beans at all. It has that reptile-y skin. I'm like, no, no, no. You'd be surprised. It's actually very calm and very chill with you.

**Janette:** That is so cool. What kind of care does a bearded dragon need?

**Nathan:** The kids completely take care of the bearded dragon. I don't do anything at all. I have my morning library kids, they come in and give it its kale. They feed it worms and crickets. They clean the cage, they clean the water. My only job is during spring break or winter break, I just bring the bearded dragon home to my son, and then he takes care of it. Then we just bring it back and the kids take care of it. There's nothing that I have to do, which is great. The bearded dragon is super, super chill. It just hangs on kids all day long and roams around the library.

**Janette:** Cool. So it’s not confined to its environment, it can roam free.

**Nathan:** It has a space that it stays in at night, but typically, throughout the day, it's just hanging on a child somewhere in the library. Most of the time it's the end of the class, and I'm like, "Who has the bearded dragon? Let's put Beans away."

**Leah:** "Put your stuff away and also put the bearded dragon back." I don't know if I could have a reptile roaming my library. That would probably make me a little nervous. [laughs]

**Nathan:** It also depends on some of the teachers. We know some teachers coming in and like, "Could you just keep Beans over in the makerspace area?" Then there's other teachers that just grab it. They're holding the bearded dragon, taking it away from the children because they want their Beans time. [laughter]

**Janette:** Beans forever. I wanted to get a little bit more into, what brings Nathan and Emily into the library? If you're willing to share with us, what was the first thing that made you come in to use the library? Was it your coursework? Have you always just enjoyed the school library even before you got to middle school?

**Emily:** I personally always loved going to the library ever since I was like, I don't know, four or five years old. My mom would always take me to the library, pick out some books, go do the little activities, the scavenger hunts there were. That's where I fell in love with the library. Going into elementary school, we had our own library in our school. It was like a game changer. At the school I was at before, we didn't have a library. We had to go to our public library. When I got to our school and we had a library, I was so happy. During my free periods, I would go and help out my librarian organize the books, put them where they go, and check the books in, and help kids check them out. When I got to middle school, I loved it even more because we had this new remodeled library with new books, and all this new stuff that I could work with. It was so eye-opening, and I loved it.

**Janette:** Someone get this girl into library school.

**Leah:** Yes, definitely. [laughs]

**Janette:** Future librarian, maybe, I don't know. No pressure, no pressure. That's amazing, though. I also love that-- This is a sad, but also a good point for us to hear that you could tell the difference as a student in a school where you don't have a library and where you do.

**Leah:** Exactly.

**Janette:** It did make an impact on you. That's something I think we don't think of enough. We're always thinking from a lesson standpoint or a classroom, academic standpoint, but the fact that you as a student, even a very young student in elementary school, noticed that something was lacking.

**Leah:** What about you, Nathan? What was your history with the library?

**Nathan:** When I was younger, we had the Oak Lawn Public Library. My brother would take me there. I didn't see the library for books. I used it for electronics because I always knew I liked them. When I got older, when we came to OLHMS, I was like, whoa, this is cool. Just then I was getting into books like Percy Jackson. I like to read books, yeah, but I also like to do more things than just reading books.

Sometimes I come in, I say hi to the kids, and I work on the electronic stuff. The other day I came in here for drones and helped hook up the VRs to the TVs and everything. What brought me into the library was, since we're advancing in technology, you can now listen to audio books, borrow digital books. When I was younger, I realized that and I thought it was so cool.

**Janette:** It sounds like you're just really interested in the technology piece of it. That's something that I think is really great about school libraries, too, is that it's not just books. There's all different kinds of things you can do in a library. We talk a lot about ways to bring in kids that aren't readers. How do you attract-- Some libraries will have game days or game nights, where they play role-player games and things like that, like a whole Dungeons and Dragons kind of thing going on.

There's a lot of technology that happens in information spaces. I'm very into coding. I'm actually a data analyst at the system that I work for. I do a lot of Python coding, and coding languages are something I'm really interested in. So for me, those are the resources that I am attracted to in library spaces. I think that's cool that you have some of those interests as well.

**Leah:** I have to say, I think we've already learned two very important things. One, the library just has to be there. Two, it's not just about books. It's a very clear example here that, yeah, we have great books, and he loves to read, but he is way into a lot of different things. If the library is not there and they don't have a lot to offer, then maybe Nathan wouldn't be a regular visitor.

**Leah:** It's almost like Heather coached you what to say. [laughter] I'm just kidding. It's funny. I make that joke only because of the fact that when librarians are talking about this stuff, we're always sharing stories about the students that we work with, but also talking about these very same things that you are both pointing out is that, we notice when there's no library, we notice when the books--

One of you mentioned having a brand new renovated space and how that feels. It feels different than walking into like an old decrepit, dungeon-y space that's dim and the books smell weird. All that kind of thing. It's a different kind of feeling. You feel like it's important. It feels like you matter. I guess that is a good transition into, what kinds of things can you do? You've already told us a lot of the amazing things about your library. Are there other things you want to share that you love about it or activities and things you can do?

**Leah:** Wait a minute. We just had a short break due to some technical difficulties and the quail eggs came up. I want to hear about that.

[laughter]

**Heather:** We did just have quail eggs in the library. Again, it's whatever people want. We just make it happen in here. We had about a dozen quail hatch, and the kids got to come in and out all day long. We actually got to watch them hatch. Then we took them from the incubator into their brooder. Then the kids were able to take care of them until we returned them to the farm.

It was all day of just kids like running in to get a quick check. We actually had to set up an iPad and record it because there was just so many kids running in and out, in and out. It happens that the library is right above the main office, and so all the time-- We don't have the traditional quiet library. I get a lot of phone calls like, "What are you doing now?" Or like, "What's happening up there?" [laughter] That is the library up there, right?

**Leah:** This is the best, the absolute best story I have heard about proving to your administration that the library is getting used because they call you to tell you that too many kids are running in and out. That's amazing.

**Janette:** Or what we've learned is your library should be on the upstairs of a two-story school so that people can hear the traffic from downstairs. That's amazing. I love that you have so many non-reader focused things. Thinking about the setting of your school, like where it's located in the suburbs of Chicago, knowing that some of your students may not have access to things like farms, quail eggs, and bringing those experiences to the students is a great part of what the library is about, too. I think this is a perfect example of that.

**Heather:** Thanks.

**Leah:** What are some other activities you've done in the library, Emily and Nathan, that have been your favorites?

**Nathan:** We have a drone program. It started a couple months ago, and every Wednesday on a late start or every other Wednesday sometimes, we come in, we take the drones, and we do missions to simulate real life situations. Like the fires in California, I'm pretty sure, they use something called the dragon eggs. You simulate it by getting a little ball and a 3D printed cup, and you throw them. And if you fight fire with fire, fire can actually extinguish the other fire. We tried that. We do little challenges sometimes, little competitions. Winners get a little prize. We're going on a field trip this week to this Museum of Science and Industry for drones.

**Janette:** Okay, so that is one of my favorite places. How can I get on your field trip?

**Leah:** Heather, is that your field trip or is that in conjunction with other teachers? As a librarian, I never got to take the kids on a field trip. I could go on them with other teachers.

**Heather:** All I do is plan field trips. I love getting everybody out of the building, and I love getting out of the building. I think there's nothing better than having kids have these experiences out in the real world. Anytime I have an opportunity to plan a field trip, I'm like, let’s go. I was actually on a field trip when I planned this field trip. Moraine Valley Community College invited us for their STEM day. I get to bring a bunch of kids, and they go through different exhibits.

While we were in the exploration zone, the Museum of Science and Industry was there showcasing all of the wonderful things they do. I saw they had an opportunity for this superhuman field trip where you learn about how science and technology combined with your superhuman body can do all these amazing things. I was like, oh, how do we get-- we want to go. They said, "Well, it’s happening next week." I'm like, we're available. [laughter] Send the bus, we'll go. If I have any opportunity to take the kids, any group of kids out of the building and experience something new, I get a lot of support.

**Janette:** We are really fortunate, especially in the Chicagoland area. I can speak for this area. We have a lot of great resources and programs like that, that it's just a matter of having the time and the capacity to get to them. Museum of Science and Industry, the Field Museum, we're so fortunate to have places like that for kids to be able to go and learn that are close by.

**Leah:** I travel a lot around the Southern part of the state, and we're obviously too far from Chicago. My part of the state is very close to St. Louis. The schools frequently go to St. Louis. Then I was over talking to some very deep Southern Illinois librarians and some far Eastern Illinois librarians. I realized they all are making this happen for their kids. They are carting them to Indiana or Kentucky or someplace where there's a larger city where there's great things for them to see and do. A lot of my school libraries are very, very rural. They have the opposite. They probably can see birds hatch on a regular basis, but they probably don't get to see the drones. I think that's great that libraries are such a part of making the kids' horizons bigger.

**Janette:** Do you have anything you want to share, Emily, before we move on?

**Emily:** We have a lot of offer in our library. There's always something new going on. We have 3D printers with the drones, and making prosthetic arms, we have used the 3D printers to do that.

**Janette:** Just no big deal making some prosthetics. It's fine.

**Leah:** All in a day's work.

**Janette:** What's the funniest thing that's ever happened in your library? Do you have a funny memory?

**Nathan:** From time to time, I do like to help. I just so happened to be the mascot for one time. My helper, he likes to mess around with people sometimes. He goes up to Ms. McCarthy, he goes, "Can we go into the library real quick? I have a plan." She goes, "Yeah, sure." So I’m hiding as the costume and I'm pretending to be a limp and they're like, "Oh, they put the costume here, so that means there is someone roaming around. Oh, they must have taken it off." They go to touch it, and one of them touches it, and I get up, and I started moving around, and they start screaming. Everyone's running.

**Leah:** And then the office calls, right, from downstairs? [laughter]

**Nathan:** "What's going on now?"

**Janette:** That's amazing. How about you, Emily? Do you have a funny memory?

**Emily:** All right. There's a lot, but one of my favorite ones was when we were help organizing for the 6k that we traditionally run every year and Ms. McCarthy helps organize it. We were shooting some content to get the word out there that we were having a 6k and to raise more money. We were all getting all hyped up, doing all this content, and we got so ahead of ourselves that we forgot the whole thing. One of our friends was like, "Stop." She went, "Stop." Then we all just jumped up.

Once again, the office probably went calling Ms. McCarthy, what we were doing up there. We ended up scratching the whole thing. We had to go edit the video out. It was really fun because we got the video on clip, but it deleted. It was a moment.

**Janette:** She's like, "It was a moment."

**Leah:** [chuckles] That's what school is about, is moments that you're going to remember always. Yeah.

**Janette:** The thing I love about this conversation we've had so far is that I don't feel like any of your examples have used the same thing twice. You all are very busy. I realize that Ms. McCarthy is doing a lot. She's got a lot of programs, a lot of time. You were just talking about this video, promotion for a 6K. I'm like, okay, what else? What do you not do?

**Leah:** Exactly. I think that might be a shorter list.

**Janette:** I do feel it's a really great example of how the library touches every part of student life and every part of school. We talk a lot about how it can be the center point of your experience, and it can be so many different things, and it connects to all parts.

**Heather:** That reminds me. I was laughing at a student. We had family conferences, and she brought her dad into the library, and he's like, "Wow, this is beautiful." She's like, "Imagine this, you walk in, and he's on the VR headset, and he's flying a drone, and Beans is out," and she's going through every single part of the library. He's like, "Wow, is that how you would summarize the year so far?" She's like, "No, dad, that happened this morning."

[laughter]

**Heather:** He's like, "Oh, okay. All that?" I'm like, every morning, every morning. We open the library early and the kids just pour in. If they're going to get up an hour before school starts to come in and do some extra activities or just hang out with their friends or eat breakfast or whatever, we just open it up and that is basically what it looks like every morning.

There's the kid in the corner playing his instrument while the student right next to him is reading a book and doesn't care that there's a trumpet in their ear, and everybody-- It's just a great place for everybody just to come together, do what they want to do, and feel safe and loved while they're doing it.

**Janette:** That's so cool. I have a question for Nathan and Emily. What does Ms. McCarthy do that makes you feel comfortable and welcome in the library? You both talked about feeling like you belong there and you can come in there anytime and there's lots of things that you want to do there. What is it that makes you feel like it's your space and it's a safe space?

**Emily:** For me, it's just her energy. Ms. McCarthy, she'll tell you right away, like she'll crack a joke. She just gets us. She's not your typical adult that's like, "No, don't do that. No, stay quiet. This is the library." She's that teacher that's like, "Go ahead, go do it. I don't care." "Go bonkers." "You could go fly that drone." "Yes, you can go read that book." She just brings the energy there. You feel welcome right away. There's no need to be shy or be nervous for anything. You could just be yourself.

**Janette:** I love that.

**Nathan:** During media productions in first trimester, you just record stuff. For my final project, I go, "Ms. McCarthy, I need the library, I need the iPads, I need all this." She's like, "Sure, yes, you can have it." I'm like, oh, okay. I did multiple days. She made sure no one touched the iPad I was recording on. Like how Emily said, she's very like, "Yeah, sure, go ahead." We were able to reserve the podcast room for a scene because I was doing a detective movie. I had a bunch of people come in and do cameos from my past projects.

And talking about drones, she looks at the papers and all the directions. She's like, "Yeah, no, we don't need this. If you guys want to do something, you guys can do it. I'm pretty sure you guys know how drones work. Here's an iPad, here's a drone. Have fun." You feel so welcome and you feel like that you can put anything that your mind wants to it. I was able to make that movie possible. I was working on it for weeks. She just made it-- she cut down the process so easily. The drones, it's just so much fun to work with that.

**Janette:** Sounds like she's just on your team. You know what I mean?

**Leah:** Yeah.

**Janette:** You feel like she's on your side, right?

**Emily:** Yeah.

**Leah:** I want a Ms. McCarthy. [chuckles]

**Janette:** I do, too. Also, Leah, we need to get Nathan's autograph now before he's famous, because I feel like there's a movie in his future somewhere, right? That's definitely coming through.

**Emily:** One more thing about Ms. McCarthy is that if she says she will do it, she'll do it and she'll get it done. Planning a field trip, she'll be like, "Yeah, we're going to go there." Bam, the next week or two, there's a permission slip form, ready to get signed. It's like she'll get it done and she'll be there. It's crazy how she gets everything done.

**Janette:** That's amazing.

**Emily:** So grateful to have her.

**Janette:** Heather, you sound amazing. [chuckles] Thank you for all you're doing for your school and for your students. This is also a good time to ask you then, what advice do you have for other school librarians and how they can make this happen?

**Heather:** Well, I'm in a very fortunate space. We have good kids, really, really great kids. When you take away all the things that you typically have to worry about with students, like, they love the library, they want to use the library. So we don't see a lot of classroom management issues or other things you might see in a typical classroom setting because they're just so grateful for all the things that we have to offer them. I also am really blessed to have the Ed Foundation that helps fund things for us. All the way from top level, our district really believes the library is the heart of the school.

They have completely renovated our library, and then each media center in the elementary buildings, they're going through and renovating each of them, so that when you do walk into the space, you have that great, loving feeling. My advice to other librarians is just listen to the kids. I feel like they're so much more creative and innovative than a lot of the adults that maybe need that new creative spark. The kids know what they want. If there's any way that you can even provide a piece of that to them, then they'll figure out the rest. You just have to get them started, and they'll be so happy to just come back and keep working for you.

**Janette:** That's great advice. It is hard, and I think we hear from a lot of librarians who have a lot of great ideas, but don't know how to make it happen. Also then, some who feel like they're stuck in a creative rut. I love the idea of turning it back to the students to get their input and their take on what they want to see happening. Because ultimately, it is for them. I mean, yeah, we have this professional responsibility for curriculum alignment and those types of support and material, collection management, and stuff like that.

At the end of the day, what brings kids into the library is sometimes almost more important than that, right? You've got to get them to engage in the first place.

**Leah:** Also, something I want to go back to was the failed hydroponics. Because a lot of people who try something and it doesn't work out, they're like, "That was a failure." But Nathan doesn't look at it as a failure. I'm pretty sure Heather doesn't look at it. You tried it, you learned something. We're going forward from here. That is what learning is.

**Heather:** We're like experts at failing and trying again here. I'm very comfortable with letting the students take control. That does mean the bulletin boards and the displays are a little bit crooked, but they're still up. It means that the books are not shelved in exactly the right place, but they're pretty close to where they need to be. This is their space, right? They're the ones that are using it. They're the ones that own it. I'm just the one that's like, what do you need now? We'll figure out how to get it. Here it is. Now, you go figure out how this works.

Would I ever put hydroponics in my library? No, Nate won't tell you that we flooded the library three, four times. The bearded dragon light almost set the library on fire. We're very good at failing, and just try again. How do we hide what just happened? Were everybody's good, everybody's safe? Okay, let's try again, let's figure it out.

**Janette:** That's a good life lesson. Try, try again. Because not everything you do in life is going to work out perfectly the first time. Those are important life skills also being taught in the library, which is amazing. So, we talk a lot about the books that we like to read, at least Leah, Ola, and I do in the podcast. We were hoping maybe that the three of you would be willing to share what you like to read. I know we already heard a mention of *Percy Jackson*, right?

**Leah:** I love *Percy Jackson.*

**Janette:** Which is always a fan favorite. Do you have a favorite genre, favorite author, just a favorite book in general?

**Emily:** I found myself recently loving more history and reading a lot more nonfiction with some fiction factors in it. I recently read a book by Steve Sheinkin, *The Great Escape*, something with escape. I love that book. It was a great book. I was like a bookworm. That book was in my face. I like learning about history, like how you can grow from things and how things changed over time, and how we evolved as people and as a society. I like learning about history and the factors that comes with it.

**Leah:** I love a good narrative nonfiction myself. It's nonfiction, but it reads like a story.

**Janette:** Yeah. What kind of history do you like to read about? Anything in particular?

**Emily:** Right now, I was reading a lot about World War I and World War II, during those wars. Those are my favorite because it shows how people, they were really resilient during those times and how they faced so many challenging factors. It shows me how I should be more grateful, how I live in a society where everything is protected, and how we have the freedom to do everything we want. It's crazy how we've came over time.

**Janette:** Yeah. I think you can learn a lot by looking backwards sometimes, but you got to keep looking forward too, which that's a great point. How about you, Nathan? You want to share anything?

**Nathan:** Like I said, I like reading *Percy Jackson*. I've read almost every single book. I do like the history stuff, too. World War II is actually my favorite because you can really see the improvement of the machinery and weapons just in the span of 30 years. That just amazes me that you can do something so quickly. We can go from having to load a bullet once and then over and over and over again. "Oh, we're out," over and over and over again. It was just super fascinating to me to see how quick humans can advance.

**Janette:** I love that you all are getting to experience all these different genres, too. The fact that you read nonfiction, I still as an adult don't love nonfiction. I do love history, but I don't really enjoy reading nonfiction. Yeah, stick with that. [chuckles] It'll serve you well later. I wanted to talk about how you find books, how do you decide what you're going to read next. Because that's a hard thing. Like me, I'm a mood reader. I just kind of jump from thing to thing based on what I'm in the mood for. Some of what you read probably has to do with school assignments and stuff like that, but, when you're picking something for fun, how do you choose? Is it social media? Does a friend recommend something to you? How do you find books?

**Leah:** I thought you were going to ask, how do you find the time to read with all of the things that you do? [chuckles]

**Janette:** For real. How do you find the time to read?

**Leah:** Once you decide you do have some time to read, there.

**Emily:** Personally, it's what's catching my eye. I have to agree with you, like a mood reader. If it's during summertime, then I want a summer book or something that will reflect summer because I'm in the summer mood. Right now, since I'm really studying for tests and World War I right now in social-- World War II, sorry, we're learning about in social studies, the Cold War, into that genre, I've been more about that side of history. Definitely, during the fall and during winter, I'm more about those mysterious books because it sets the tone for the season. That's how I like to find my books.

**Janette:** Yeah. Same.

**Nathan:** I personally am not a mood reader. I just need action. If there's not any, then I'm like--

[laughter]

**Leah:** Let the record reflect that he rolled his eyes in case you're not watching.

**Nathan:** I just mainly like World War I, World War II, Cold War, Vietnam War, Korean War. It's just so fascinating to me that you can just learn all that just from a book.

**Janette:** This is, again, too, like the power of books. I feel like I'm preaching to the choir. It's like being able to experience something that you were not alive for. I wasn't even alive for that, and I'm really old. How else do you learn about those things or know what they were going through? I love that Nathan has picked up on the technology piece of stuff. Because for me, when I read about those time periods, I focus a lot more on the politics and the way that evolved, but I didn't really think about the weaponry part of it. For me, that was just like a foregone conclusion.

**Leah:** Well, he's a tech guy. Yeah.

**Janette:** That's kind of what I'm getting at, right, is like, your own personal interests are hidden in all these different facets of the subject matter. There's books that get at all of it. Do you think that you're like little book influencers in your school? Do you share your love of books? Do you talk to your friends, and do you encourage them to read what you're reading, or how does that work?

**Emily:** Yeah, so, the book that I just read, the one about like the escape with Rudi, his name is, the main character. I gave that book to one of my friends, Aine, because we all went to a field trip, thanks to Ms. McCarthy. We actually met the author who wrote that book, and we were all fascinated. We were all fascinated by how he went through the story and how, the process of making the story and getting intel on all the characters. The book overall was very greatly wrote.

I told my friend Aine-- she saw me reading that book day after day. She's like, "What are you reading? It looks like such a good book." I was like, trust me, you need this. I'm going to give you this book. I believe she finished it. She showed me, she's like, "I'm done. I finished." She's like, "Such a great book." I'm like, I have to agree with you on that.

**Janette:** One of my favorite things is to chat with my friends about books that we both read. Sometimes you need to just debrief, right? We're going to talk a little bit maybe about what's next for both of you. You said, you're eighth graders, right? First of all, do you have big plans for the summer?

**Nathan:** For summer, I'm not done with school and I'm doing two sessions of summer school. So I will not be getting a break. Then I'm also doing summer camps, like a music camp. You play in a band. I'm doing wrestling over the summer. I'll be doing that. I'm doing algebra 1 and world history to get some more electives, so I'll be busy. Then after, I think it ends at 2:00, I'll be able to hang out with my friends. Hopefully, I'll be very productive during the summer. Then two weeks before high school starts, I got marching band camp. That'll be fun to be in the beaming hot sun.

**Janette:** Very cool, very cool. How about you, Emily?

**Emily:** This summer is going to go by so quickly. I have a lot of traveling to do, a lot of camps to do. Right when I graduate, I'm going to Arizona to meet some family down there. They just moved. Then after that, I have some camps to do, cheer for high school. I'm thinking about doing flag football. Towards the end of the summer, I'm going to Mexico for a wedding.

**Janette:** Wow. International traveler in our midst right here.

**Emily:** I'm going to be a part of a cotillion. I'm going to be in their court. I'm going to be dancing for them. It's going to be really fun. Then towards the end of the summer, I'm also going to be in marching band.

**Janette:** Oh, cool. Now, will you go to the same high school?

**Emily:** Yeah, we actually are going to the same high school.

**Janette:** Very, very cool. Are you excited for high school or nervous? Do you have any feelings about it?

**Emily:** I'm a little mixed emotion about it. I'm kind of sad because I'm leaving all my friends and leaving OLHMS, which is the place I've known for the past three years. But I’m kind of excited to meet the new people, be in a bigger school with older people, and get to make new connections with others.

**Leah:** Your high school is going to be lucky to have you both.

**Janette:** I agree.

**Emily:** Thank you.

**Nathan:** For high school, I'm going to have a huge reputation because of my sister. I don't know what to expect of it. All the teachers have noticed me. They've been looking at me. Then they go, "Are you Emma's younger brother?" I'm like, yeah. They're like, "I'm expecting a lot out of you." Oh, great. Isn't that just fun?

**Janette:** That's hard.

**Nathan:** Me and my brother, Tommy, and my other sister, Abby, and they remember me because of them. I resemble all three of them.

**Leah:** You can't escape it.

**Janette:** No, it's hard. I have two older sisters. I will tell you, and we're all one, two, three, right in a row in school. By the time I got all those teachers, they were like, "So--" I was like, ugh. I was always just somebody’s sister. It is hard. You know what? You do you and be yourself. They're going to love and appreciate that too, I'm sure. Don't let it get to you. That's my advice. [chuckles]

**Leah:** What about Heather? What are your next big plans?

**Heather:** I travel all summer long. I love traveling. I like to do what I call travel with a purpose. I try and pick one trip each summer where I can do some volunteer work or community work, and then bring it back to my students, and then say like, this is what I did. What should we do here? That's why Emily mentioned the 6K. I've traveled to Africa a bunch of times. We're currently working on building a library in Zimbabwe. The kids do fundraisers here at the school. I've volunteered on an elephant sanctuary in Thailand. Yeah, I know--

**Leah:** I want to do that. Oh, that sounds so amazing.

**Heather:** Even shoveling elephant poop. I'm like, this is great. This is amazing. I love it.

**Leah:** This is my favorite kind of poop shoveling.

**Heather:** Yeah. Then this summer, I'll be working on a coral reef project in Indonesia.

**Janette:** That is so amazing.

**Leah:** Okay. I just feel like a very low achiever now that I've talked to all these people. [laughs]

**Janette:** Thank you for making me feel bad about myself. No, I'm just kidding, I'm just kidding. I am very excited for all of you. You all are going to have a lot of amazing experiences. Yeah, I don't have anything nearly that great planned for this summer. I'm going to Detroit. That's not exciting.

**Leah:** I'm going to Michigan, too, this summer. Maybe we'll run into each other.

**Janette:** Yeah, nothing against Detroit. It's just that's the extent of my excitement. Nothing super different from, I guess, my regular life. This brings us to what we consider to be the closing segment of the podcast, and this is where we talk a little bit about mental health and well-being. This is something that we try to remind librarians specifically about that it's important to take care of yourself. I think students, that's a good lesson for you too, right? There's a lot of focus on your own mental health and well-being in your education and making sure you're taking care of yourself.

What we like to do is just ask our guests, what's something you like to do to de-stress or how do you take care of yourself? When you're in a tough spot and you just need to get away, what's something that you like to do?

**Emily:** When I need something calming to do, I like to go on a walk. I'm a runner and I'm a walker. I love to just go on a run, let that anger, all that tensity I have and just let it go by walking or running. Recently, moving on to playing my cello, because it's my second instrument, I found myself more relaxed after my lessons, less tense, everything feels calm and very low. I feel very peaceful.

**Janette:** That's amazing. Music is really powerful for me, too. I can understand how that creative outlet almost, it puts you in a different mindset, right?

**Nathan:** What I like to do to de-stress is just music. I just play one of the instruments that I have or sometimes I have music on standby. When I'm on a car ride or on the way to school today, I was listening to music. I tell people that they can take anything but my music. That's something I stand by because I love music so much. I also like to play guitar and just learn new songs. I have a certain guy who does tutorials and he matches my energy, so I just watch his videos. They're 30-minute videos when they're supposed to be 10-minute videos because he just talks so much, so that's what I like to do.

**Leah:** What about you, Heather?

**Heather:** Typically, my self-care, or shelf-care as you guys like to call it, is, definitely during the school year, it's spending time with my family. I have my son and daughter, when I'm hanging out with them or doing what they enjoy and can just leave everything else behind. My husband and I like to go for walks together. As it gets into the summertime, that's when my self-care transitions to travel and just exploring new places and forgetting about everything here, and just exploring the world.

**Janette:** That's a great way to lose yourself. I want to thank you all again for making time for us this morning. It has been really a pleasure to talk with you, and I've loved to hear all about your life and everything that you're doing at OLHMS. It's just amazing the things that you're accomplishing. I want to thank all of our listeners for listening and for making our first season of *Can't Shelve This* such a great success. Your support means a ton to us. We really hope everyone has a great summer. You can always let us know if you have any questions or topic ideas for season two.

You can leave us a voicemail on our hotline, which is 630-734-5015, or you can always reach us via email. Thanks again to all of our guests and have a great summer.

**[01:03:10] [END OF AUDIO]**