



125 S. Prospect Ave., Elmhurst, IL 60126
(630) 279-8696 • www.elmhurstpubliclibrary.org

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact Information:
Rita Perona, Head of Marketing
Office: 630-279-8696
Email: rita.perona@elmlib.org

Social Work Intern Begins Office Hours at Elmhurst Public Library

ELMHURST, IL — Elmhurst Public Library's new Social Work Intern, Tim Vo, begins office hours at the Library Tuesday, Aug. 28.

Vo, an unpaid intern, is pursuing dual Masters degrees in Social Work and Business Administration at Aurora University. Previous to his internship in Elmhurst, he completed an internship with Communities in Schools, a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing outside resources such as counseling or social support to children in schools.

As Elmhurst Public Library explores the option of providing more direct access to social service resources, the idea of individuals coming to the library to seek help and information is a cornerstone philosophy of public libraries.

"Having someone with a social services background at the Library is helpful not only for the public, but for staff," says Mary Beth Harper, Director. "We are testing the waters to determine if this could be a positive evolution of our services to promote a welcoming environment for all."

Finding social workers in libraries is a nationwide trend that is gaining momentum. Nearby libraries in Oak Park, Evanston, and Addison have social services specialists on staff.

Because libraries are public buildings, individuals who walk through the doors each day may be dealing with a variety of difficulties in varying degree: mental health issues, job instability, domestic abuse, homelessness, dementia, or

stresses related to caregiving. Having a social service specialist available on-site to both staff and patrons adds another facet to the resources available to the community.

Vo's specialization focuses on the world of non-profit agencies and the unique challenges they face. "I jumped at this opportunity," says Vo. "Essentially, my goal here is to get resources to patrons who may need it. We can't offer any services inside the Library, but we'll be able to refer them out," he says. Vo adds that he is also a resource to staff. Throughout Vo's internship, a needs assessment will be made available to help determine persistent issues and possible future staffing solutions. The Library aims to target issues that typically occur in libraries and to handle them in new ways.

Vo's internship continues until Spring 2019. He is available to assist the public near the 2nd floor computers during these hours: Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. and 2-4 p.m.; Wednesdays, 2-4 p.m. and 5-7 p.m.

Elmhurst Public Library enriches life in Elmhurst by providing opportunities to connect, create, and explore. EPL provides the support, resources, and environment for Elmhurst patrons to: pursue a love of reading; access information; explore interests; engage with technology; connect with others; and create and innovate. Elmhurst Public Library is the place for discovery at the heart of the community.