

## Meet this issue's Featured Library Employee for the Missouri Library Association, Hadiza Sa-Aadu!

### **What is your name, your library, and your role at the library?**

My name is Hadiza and I am a small business and non-profit specialist at the Kansas City Public Library.

### **What originally got you interested in working at a library?**

I spent a lot of time in the library after school as a kid and teen in Iowa. My first "job" was actually volunteering for the library in 5th grade. I was even part of the Coralville Public Library's inaugural Teen Advisory Board (we endearingly called "Tab"). Because of these experiences, working in a library as an adult was always a possibility in my mind, and I've always thought to look at library job postings in the places I've lived.

Before my position at the KC Public Library, I was never actually hired nor interviewed for any library system. That changed in 2019, a little less than a year out of grad school (University of Iowa's MBA program). In grad school I had an assistantship where I helped small business owners with marketing. I was actually working part-time for LINC as a student counselor when I saw the opening at the KC Public Library and thought it was the perfect fit. And now I've been here almost 5 years!

### **What keeps you coming back every day?**

Getting to meet people who have real solutions to real problems and getting to know them over time. Also figuring out ways to use Library assets to help people who face immense barriers to accessing technological, digital and other resources in the broader Kansas City entrepreneurial and non-profit ecosystem.

### **What's challenging about your work?**

I'm only one person and cannot remove the barriers by myself. No singular group, organization or company can either, at least not for everyone. The challenges that manifest when working with patrons in my role are the challenges imposed by a capitalist society that designates certain classes of people as "less than" and, at best, not to be taken seriously. My job often is to be an advocate for people who have tried accessing resources but for various structural and interpersonal reasons, are not able to get the assistance they are seeking.

### **Has your work made you either curious, or passionate, or awestruck about something?**

I've always been a curious person. Libraries have only fueled that curiosity. My work allows me to see who is doing good work in Kansas City and I'm always so amazed by the fact that many different people who have never met, but who experience the same challenges imposed by capitalism have similar ideas. My goal is to bring these people and groups together to form some sort of coalition to better advocate for and meet the needs of people whose autonomy is often not considered, especially unhoused people, people who have dealt with addiction and severe mental health issues and people coming out of incarceration.

**What book, author, artist, show, or music are you engaging with this week, either personally or professionally? Persuade us in one or two sentences that we should pick this up, too.**

I've been reading Silvia Wynter's *Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument*. I'm reading it quite slowly because the writing is a bit dense. I'm reading it because I've been thinking about the world we live in and how it was designed to be this way. None of this immense inequality was a mistake.

**Is there anything else you'd like to share with us?**

Today, the people of Sudan have endured over 300 days of ethnic cleansing and outright genocide at the hands of militarized groups. The people of Palestine have endured over 100 days of outright genocide in retaliation to their resistance efforts against Zionist occupation for over 75 years. As these genocides continue, and the clarity of U.S. involvement begins to seep into wider consciousness, the question of "who gets to be fully human" is one that we in the Western world will be forced to answer with simplicity and clarity. Institutionally speaking, I believe public libraries are the most equipped to lead this charge.