As I begin living on my own and working in book publishing after graduation, I gain a whole new perspective on the processes, challenges, and vitally important roles of libraries outside the academic environment:

**Resource access** takes on a whole new meaning to me as I start to see the inestimable importance of public library systems in providing people and businesses with opportunities to utilize services and sources of knowledge. Everything from digital newspaper subscriptions and databases to online learning platforms and even movie streaming services—these are opportunities for personal and professional development that huge portions of the population might never have access to otherwise.

Community access is something that I only learned the importance of when I first began to live independently, but that importance cannot be overstated. In short, libraries are a refuge for people—as places to learn and work freely, as well as to connect with other people through events and programs that can be hard to find elsewhere. The more time I have spent around libraries as an adult, the more I believe in the absolute necessity for the development of the right community outreach systems and opportunities for social engagement in public libraries.

Digital access, to everything from basic book catalogs to historical photograph collections, presents a world of possibility—and challenges—for the libraries and their users. As the advantages and opportunities of digitization continue to advance in all areas of information management, it's vitally important to continue discovering the ways that library systems might be built and improved to become the most secure, efficient method of storing vast quantities of data and resources, as well as the easiest way for users of all occupations and levels of digital literacy to utilize those resources.

And right here in San Jose, one can see how library and information science helps us to...

**LOOK BACK**
Preserve and provide access to the cultural touchstones and achievements of the past, providing vitally important intellectual and cultural perspectives, particularly through activities like the preservation of historical materials—such as the awesome collections at the Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies—and the cataloging of local histories that would often be lost otherwise.

**LOOK FORWARD**
Help accelerate the capabilities and possibilities of modern enterprise operations through efficient data analysis, operation, and organization—especially for high-tech companies like those found in Silicon Valley.

Now, after years of working in, learning in, and living around libraries, I’m entering the MLIS program at San Jose State with the ultimate goal of **advancing people’s agency**. The ability to seek out **knowledge and information** for any pursuit or goal; to find community and resources both human and material for all kinds of personal empowerment and betterment; to experience a space of **access, inclusion, and freedom** for intellect and expression—these are the gifts that this work provides to others. Ultimately, my goal is to learn how best to employ, teach, implement, and expand the resources of libraries public and institutional, all to more fully preserve and enrich the information of human experience.

I attend UC Davis to receive my B.A. in English, and with my first exposure to real research and the variety of resources a library offers beyond the books on the shelves. Shields Library becomes an integral part of my daily life, and the guidance of the librarians there provides many of the most valuable lessons in independent research that I would gain during my time at school.

Academic librarianship provides the opportunity to integrate past and future scholarly work—as well as the research and teaching that goes into it—with the constantly advancing trends of digital access, preservation, and curation. In doing so, I can enlighten new students, researchers, and instructors to the enormous breadth of academic work found in institutional library systems, and the remarkable ease-of-access that their accompanying digital frameworks provide.

The number of undergraduates in the United States who are first-generation college students. A 2019 survey of college counselors showed that a whopping **81%** believed additional help in the areas of mentoring and advising and/or navigating college could help these first-generation students succeed in their coursework. Forward-thinking and engaging librarianship can provide exactly that.**

**My path**
to a career in library and information science began just across town from San Jose State University...

The library on Alborn Road in San Jose is, more or less, where I learned to love reading. Summer reading programs and the opportunity the library provided for my mom to bring my siblings and me there to just roam the stacks for hours on end helped shape how I value learning and reading to this day, instilling a natural love for the endless variety of topics one can explore in a library. The impact public and children’s librarians can have in the lives of young readers is enormous, and the creation of spaces that foster a passion for books and learning—not to mention providing a place to safely and constructively fill the time away from school—is a vital component of any community library.

**San Jose Public library**

**San Francisco Public library**

**UC Davis**

**The Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley**

**San Jose State University**

**Evergreen Branch, San Jose public library**

**80%** Percentage of the Beethoven Center’s unparalleled collection of books and music scores now searchable via online databases

**85%** of a child’s brain is developed by the age of 3. Making reading a part of a child’s life from the very beginning is imperative to developing strong language skills, and when access to books at home is not possible—as is the case in approximately **61%** of low-income homes in the US, according to the Literacy Project Foundation—a strong public library system becomes absolutely essential.

**Sources:**
1. https://www.literacyprojectfoundation.org/30-key-child-literacy-stats-parents-need-to-be-aware-of/
3. https://www.sjsu.edu/beethoven/collections_exhibit/