Student Voices

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Cannabis Education at Florida Libraries

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Libraries can be a source of impartial information about cannabis in their communities.

As the topic of cannabis use grows and more states develop both medical and recreational programs, libraries have the unique ability to step up boldly to provide critical information to patrons about this increasingly popular subject. Considering how fast the Florida medical cannabis program is growing, it is important for the Florida library systems to provide resources to help alleviate the critical information gaps within communities. Each community library in Florida should offer a safe place for its patrons to find accurate, reliable, and valid information regarding cannabis education. It is increasingly more important that Florida libraries consider expanding their cannabis collections and offering community options for support, discussion groups, and events.

The library should always try to help its community by offering collections that match the needs and interests of its patrons. There are parts of Florida where medical cannabis and education is both widely available and accessible. The source of cannabis information that most people seek is either from their cannabis doctor or their local dispensary (the companies where medical cannabis patients purchase cannabis). Other communities around Florida do not have local medical cannabis services or dispensaries and are often left out or ignored with current cannabis information and education. Florida library systems can step in within their individual communities by offering cannabis education within their collections as well as community outreach for interested patrons.

As I have traveled around the state of Florida, writing and visiting local library systems while being part of the cannabis community, I have witnessed the disconnect of available cannabis information in many communities. In my experience, people are curious about the medical benefits, the diverse community of supporters and advocates, and other options such as gardening or cooking with cannabis. Many people in the cannabis community find benefits from the access to educational resources that libraries provide to all patrons in all communities.

Libraries have traditionally been the place that members of the community can go to for information. As times change, attitudes and beliefs about controversial topics also change. Libraries can fill the cannabis education need in their communities by promoting educational access for all. Addressing the topic of cannabis directly reinforces the relevance of libraries as they provide educational materials and community support for all topics, including controversial ones.

Libraries need to relate to patrons by providing relevant and current information. As cannabis conversations bloom, Florida libraries should take the lead and address the topic openly so people can make their own judgment about cannabis.