Chris Sharp, PINES System Administrator at the Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS), has been selected as the January Contributor of the Month to the Evergreen open source library system by the Evergreen Project’s Outreach Committee.

Chris is one of the earliest members of the Evergreen community — hired in 2008 by GPLS, he represents the first generation of system administrators who were running Evergreen outside of the original development team.  Chris has served on the Evergreen Oversight Board, most of the Conference Planning Committees, and in 2018 was added to the Evergreen Core Committers group. He founded and continues to lead the Evergreen SysAdmin Interest Group, and also administers the community mailing lists & archives.

Even before joining the Core Committers, Chris was very active in contributing Evergreen improvements over the years.  He has authored 103 commits to Evergreen, and pushed 33 commits of others’ work.  He has also contributed 13 commits to OpenSRF.

Chris worked as a reference librarian before his interest in Evergreen led him to GPLS.  “[I went] from a curious and skilled but mostly non-technical role to becoming a developer.  So I know it’s possible and when I see people with the curiosity and the drive I want to encourage them to try things…. [and] getting involved is easier if you have someone to encourage you.”

“That’s the energy that keeps us running — the curiosity to open it up and see how it works.  That fear of looking dumb keeps people from doing their best work and I would encourage them to be bold,” he says.

Chris can often be found putting this philosophy into practice, helping others troubleshoot their Evergreen systems and answering questions in the #evergreen IRC channel.  Chris has encouraged other Georgia Evergreen users to become more involved in the community, saying, “I try to keep our agency and our libraries focused on the fact that this is a community project, and not just something for us.  Our libraries understand that we’re a player and we need to stay that way — it benefits us and the community at large.”

Chris concludes by telling us, “I think becoming fearless about putting yourself out there would be my main takeaway — that’s what I’ve done and that’s what I want everyone else to do.”

Other recent recipients of the Contributor of the Month awards have included Jane Sandberg, the Electronic Resources Librarian for Linn-Benton Community College in Albany, Oregon and Michele Morgan, Technical Support Associate for the North Of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE) in Massachusetts.

The Evergreen Project develops an open source ILS (integrated library system) used by more than 2,000 libraries around the world. The Evergreen software is used by libraries to provide their public catalog interface as well circulation, acquisition of library materials, and sharing resources among groups of libraries. The Evergreen community is marked by a high degree of participation by the librarians who use the software and contribute documentation, bug reports and fixes, funding and organizational energy to constantly improve the system.