



The Next Chapter



Newsletter of the Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation

Making friends with computers at the Ghosh Technology Learning Center

Since the library began offering free, staff-taught computer classes at its Anna Purna Ghosh Technology Learning Center in 2001, the popular courses have helped a growing number of adult learners figure out how to navigate the world of computer-based activities, from using e-mail to creating Power Point presentations.

"I don't feel so in the dark anymore when computer-related topics come up," said one recent student, a woman in her 70s, when asked about her experience. Added a 44-year-old mother, "It's good to understand what my kids are up to when they're on computers."

More than 1,167 people participated in 163 classes at the center during the last fiscal year – an increase of more than 500 from the previous year. Although their primary objectives varied, all were interested in improving their computer literacy in a world where day-to-day activities are increasingly transacted via computer – especially by young people. The latest addition to the center's curriculum, a class called "Social Computing: What are your kids doing on the Internet?," responds to parents' concerns by providing information on blogging, instant messaging, and social networking websites.

Computer literacy – and the need for parents to understand what their children are doing on the Internet –

is a topic that has also captured the interest of former Iowa first lady Christie Vilsack, who plans to visit the library in April to learn more about the Ghosh Technology Learning Center's classes for adult learners. A long-time advocate of children's literacy programs, Vilsack recently teamed up with the Verizon Foundation and the National Center for Family Literacy to encourage programs that help parents understand computer technology.

Efforts to create the Ghosh Technology Learning Center were spearheaded by the CRPL Foundation in 2000, with a lead gift provided by Dr. and Mrs. Chirantan Ghosh and additional support from other individuals and organizations.



Library staff member Nick Trenary instructs one of the free computer classes offered at the Ghosh Technology Learning Center. "Computers are becoming a huge part of our lives, not only at work but at home," says Trenary.

City Council slashes CRPL budget

The Cedar Rapids City Council has reduced the library's operating budget by approximately eight percent for Fiscal Year 2008 (July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008). Now, it's the responsibility of the Cedar Rapids Public Library Board of Trustees to decide which programs, staff, and equipment purchases will have to be cut to meet the \$367,000 budget reduction.

"We were dismayed," says Tim Hill, president of the Library Board of Trustees and a Trustee representative on the Foundation Board. City Manager Jim Prosser did not recommend library cuts to the Council so Trustees did not anticipate the action. "The City's support of the Library should be in a positive direction, especially when comparative data indicates how far our library lags behind others in per capita expenditures."

Both the Foundation and Friends of the Library boards wrote letters to Mayor Halloran and City Council members. They also spoke at the Council budget hearing and asked Council members to restore the Library budget.

"We believe this budget reduction will affect the quantity and quality of Library services that our citizens expect and deserve," says Foundation Board President Joan Thaler. "I urge Cedar Rapids residents to contact Council members and let them know how important the Library is to the community."



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OUR MISSION

*The Cedar Rapids Public
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Library Trustee Bridget Janus and her husband, Glenn, view the "Hidden Treasure" exhibit at the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art.

Jill Christine Photography/CR Museum of Art

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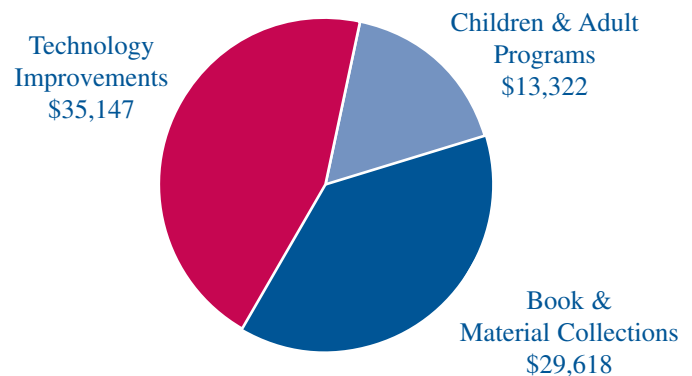
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Funded by the Foundation in 2006

- 2,523 Books
- Self-Check Station: Children's Department
- Summer Reading Programs
- Library Staff Continuing Education
- Reading Discussion Groups
- Adult Programming:
Concerts, Author Visits, Educational Exhibits

2006 Foundation Support of Cedar Rapids Public Library \$78,087



Between the Lines



Jill Christine Photography/CR Museum of Art

“Hidden Treasure,” an exhibit featuring 120 original children’s book illustrations from the Cedar Rapids Public Library’s collection, runs through May 13 at the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art. Included are a letter and original illustration created by Theodor Geisel (Dr. Seuss) for the children of Cedar Rapids, along with illustrations featuring Curious George, Dennis the Menace, Babar, Madeline, and many more. The Library and Foundation are seeking funds to help with the preservation of this extraordinary collection.

Spring Events at the CRPL

Saturday, April 14, 1-4 p.m., Memoir Writing Workshop with author Mary Allen, sponsored by the Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation. To pre-register, call 398-5123, ext. 258

Tuesday, April 17, 6:30 p.m., “Continuous Color the Easy U-Can-Plan Way,” presented by Master Gardeners

Friday, April 20, 7 and 9 p.m., Latin Jazz, co-sponsored by Jazz at the ‘Brary and KCCCK-FM. Call 398-5123, ext. 258, for your free ticket

Monday, April 23, 7 p.m., “Mi Musica” traditional Latin music exhibit and program, co-sponsored by CSPS through a grant from the Iowa Arts Council

“Forever Free” Explores Lincoln’s Pivotal Decision

From May 6 - June 15, the library will host “Forever Free: Abraham Lincoln’s Journey to Emancipation,” a traveling exhibition of displays and information about Lincoln’s decision to give slaves their freedom and its impact on America. The exhibition contains reproductions of rare historical documents, period photographs, and illustrative material such as engravings, lithographs, cartoons and political ephemera. The Foundation will sponsor an opening celebration on Sunday, May 6, at 2 pm., featuring storyteller and musician Bob Welch in a performance of “Songs of the Civil War.”



Cedar Rapids Public Library
FOUNDATION

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