

**Between
the
Lines**

Library Staff Support Their Favorite Projects

The annual Staff Advised Fund campaign was launched on February 14, 2005, raising a total of \$1,655 in contributions from the Library staff. The Foundation will add \$1,000 to the fund, bringing the total to just under \$2,700. As directed by a staff committee, the funds will be used to support three areas of the Library: Book Collection, Facility Enhancement and a Staff Event.

Foundation Board Members See Library through New Eyes

In an effort to increase their awareness of the needs and vision of the Cedar Rapids Public Library, Foundation Board members participated in small group tours with new Library Director Lori Barkema. The collection, facility and technology were the three areas highlighted.

Honor Someone Special with Gift and Memorial Books

If you are interested in honoring someone's achievements, work or life, please remember the Library's Gift Book and Memorial program. Books may be selected from the Gift Book shelf or you may work with staff to determine titles appropriate to the individual's interests. Book plates may also be included in each selection as a pleasing way to ensure a lasting tribute. Please contact the Foundation Office for more information.



Cedar Rapids Public Library
FOUNDATION

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The Next
Chapter
Newsletter of the Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation

**Young Consultants Encourage Plans for
'A Place of Their Own' at the Library**

"About the Public Library: Could you do something about the color? I think there should be a spot for ages 10 and up, don't you?"

"A few of the things I would change at the Cedar Rapids Public Library are more updated computers on the top floor; new books, more e books, more DVDs, and more tables you can read your books at."

Those pieces of frank and unsolicited input from CRPL Library users were among the comments received by incoming Library Director Lori Barkema before she even began her new job. Fifth graders at Grant Wood Elementary School who had read about her hiring in the Cedar Rapids Gazette, which they use as a learning tool, wrote letters to Barkema and her 10-year-old son welcoming them to the Cedar Rapids community. Along with suggesting places the Barkemas might like to visit, the students offered ideas for making the Library a more desirable place for people their age.

The letters found a ready audience in Barkema, who was already interested in developing an area of the Library that would house materials appealing to young readers and be a place where they could gather to read, study and use computers. Citing a study by the National Recreation and Parks Association, she noted that youth-

oriented programs and facilities do more than simply provide a way to fill unscheduled time. Ideally, they are places that encourage young people to build leadership skills in a safe environment, socialize positively with peers, and engage in community activities.

Sensing that the fifth grade correspondents would be an excellent source of input as the Library begins planning for a new young adult area, Barkema invited them to take part in on-site focus groups. On May 10, 24 students from Anita Sieh's class toured the Library, then met in small groups with Library facilitators who asked them to describe the area they would like to see developed for them at the Library.

Some recurring themes among their comments included a desire for their own colorful but peaceful place; more computers dedicated to their use; more e-books, magazines and hardcover books suitable for their age group; more CD/DVD listening and viewing stations; a healthy snack machine, and a book party for kids.

Developing an area dedicated to young readers is "a great idea," agrees Library Board President Carol Burns. "Our mission has been to get

children to get their library cards in third grade. But there has been no emphasis on this intermediate age group, and this is where we lose them. We need to develop programs and a space and a collection for older children."

Armed with the plentiful suggestions generated during the focus group sessions, a committee of Library staff and Foundation Board members will begin meeting this summer to discuss ways to better serve young library patrons in that significant age group between children and adult readers.



Fifth graders from Grant Wood Elementary School got a first-hand look at the Library's facilities and suggested ways to make it more appealing to young readers during focus group sessions held at the Library this spring.



*Cedar Rapids
Public Library*

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OUR MISSION

*The Cedar Rapids Public
Library Foundation
enhances the quality of
the Cedar Rapids Public
Library services to the
community by securing
resources to support
library programs and
projects not normally
met by public funding.*

Foundation Leader Views Library as Critical Community Resource

You wouldn't think CRPL Foundation Board President Joan Thaler would have much time for reading, given the broad sweep of her interests and activities. But her passion for books holds a central place in a life that has been dedicated to educational and humanitarian endeavors.

"I'm an addicted reader," she admits. "I have to have the book I'm reading and two books ahead." From the day she arrived in Cedar Rapids as the wife of family physician David Thaler, she has relied on the Cedar Rapids Public Library to quench that thirst for the printed page. "It's the most wonderful place – a beautiful environment – and the staff is always so helpful. The best thing is that if you want something and they don't have it, they will find it."

Thaler grew up in St. Louis, the daughter of educators, and inherited her parents' appreciation for life-long learning. A Drake University graduate, she earned her Master's in Social Work at the University of Iowa after her children were grown. Following a 30-year career as a therapist at the Abbe Center for Community Mental Health, she continues to work there part time while volunteering as a therapist at the Cedar Rapids Community Health Free Clinic – another of her passions.

With her late husband, Thaler has also been a devoted supporter of Kirkwood Community College and the Holocaust Memorial Fund started by David to help fund speakers and classes about the Holocaust at local colleges and schools.

A long-time member of the Friends of the Library, Thaler says that she "accepted with enthusiasm" when asked to serve on the Foundation Board.

"I don't know how I could express how important the Library is for our community, and especially for children." In addition to books, she points out, the Library today offers free programs, classes and computer use, as well as videotapes, CDs and DVDs.

"In my work, I see a lot of people with financial difficulties. I tell them that even if they don't have money, they can always go to the Library."

An avid painter, Thaler says she especially enjoyed working with a committee of Library staff members on planning for the Staff-Advised Fund, for which she designed event invitations around the theme of "Love Your Library."

Currently, she says of the Foundation Board, "our role is to be supportive of the new director and to help fund the many ideas she has," including her vision of "creating a space for middle school readers that will be their place to hang out."



Foundation Board President Joan Thaler, who manages to read two books a week in spite of her work and volunteer commitments, recently enjoyed reading The Story of the Night by Irish author Colm Tóibín.

Step through Wrinkle in Time with 2005 Summer Reading Program

This year's Summer Reading Program – from June 1 through August 6 – will transport readers of all ages to distant times and places with colorful themes, programs and a grand finale event fit for the lords and ladies of King Arthur's Court.

The children's program, called "Dragons, Dreams, and Daring Deeds," will offer "tons of activities," says CRPL Community Programs Specialist Nancy Olinger. In addition to regular story times, the Library will host game days, craft days, science-based events, and entertainers such as magicians and singers.

Adult and teen readers will participate in the medieval-themed "Joust Read" program. Events will include a June 11 combined young adult and adult program on bookcrossing.com – "an Internet-based way to catch books and release them back into the wild," Olinger relates. On July 23, a program especially for young adults will

present information on skateboarding and bicycling.

Prizes will be awarded weekly in all three programs, with grand prizes including bikes for the children's winners, \$50 gift certificates for young adults, and dinner and an overnight stay at the Royal Crowne Plaza Hotel for two lucky adults.

The final event of the Summer Reading Program will be a Royal Readers Fanfare, co-hosted with and located at the downtown YMCA, on Friday, August 12, from 4 to 7 p.m. This gala evening will feature salsa dancing and a book discussion for adults, games and activities for younger participants, and open swimming in the Y's pool.

Summer Reading Program registration materials for all ages are available at the second floor Programming Services desk at the downtown library or at the West Side branch located at Westdale Mall. Details on programs and events can be found online at www.crlibrary.org or by calling 398-5123, ext. 258.

Equip Your Book Club

To encourage and support area book clubs, the Library has begun purchasing multiple copies of books that are popular reads among book groups. If your club is interested in reading one of the titles currently available through this new program, you may check out the collection as a whole. Over time, copies of other titles will be added. Large print books and books on CD are also available.

Titles currently available include: *The Kite Runner* by K. Hosseini (14 paperbacks, six large print books, one book/CD), *The Da Vinci Code* by D. Brown (20 hardbacks and one book/CD), and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night* by M. Haddon (10 paperbacks).



Making Room for 'Tweeners

When we take a moment to think about all of the media, technology and entertainment options available to our young people today, we need to do more than hope that using the library will be on their list of options. Creating a space in our public library where pre-teens and young teens are eager to visit can pay huge benefits for them and our community.

It is at precisely this age that library usage typically begins to drop off. By designing an area especially for these young people, with age-appropriate reading materials, access to computers and programming, and an attractive setting, we may well be able to bridge the library usage gap between young children and adults.

If you are interested in learning more about this project, please call the CRPL Foundation Office. If you would like to help the Foundation provide financial support to the Library for youth materials, programs and equipment, please use the enclosed return envelope to send your contribution, knowing that we will put it to effective use.

**Amy Geiger, Director
CRPL Foundation**

