Focus

The newsletter for friends and the foundation of the Cedar Rapids Public Library

Fall 2015

Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library

Mission
Friends supports the Cedar Rapids Public Library services and programs; promotes literacy through outreach programs that encourage and enhance reading throughout the community; and conducts fund raising activities to assist with library and outreach projects.

CEDAR RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION

Mission
The Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation secures resources in order to enhance and enrich library programs, services and facilities not normally met by public resources.

Inside:
FOCUS on Philanthropy
Library Support & Collaborations
FRIENDS Summer Recap
Outside the Lines
New Library Cards

FALL BOOK SALE
NOVEMBER 6 - 8, 2015

Friday, Nov. 6
10 am - 6 pm

Saturday, Nov. 7
9 am - 5 pm

Sunday, Nov. 8
12 - 4 pm

CHERRY BUILDING
329 10TH AVENUE SE

FREE ADMISSION
2 FLOORS OF BOOKS
FILL A BOX FOR $8 ON SUNDAY
Letter from the Foundation

What an amazing summer! The Library reached new heights with its Summer Dare program and was awarded yet more accolades for the beautiful facilities this community built. From Landmark Library to an AIA/ALA Library Building Award, Cedar Rapids citizens can be proud of the impact your library has on this community and of its influence on libraries across the country. As we continue to celebrate summer’s accomplishments, I feel it's important to update you on a number of things coming up, including the library levy and initiatives the Foundation will support in FY16.

First and foremost, let's talk about the levy. As you may have seen in the news, the Our Library, Our Community campaign committee submitted over 3400 signatures to the City Clerk on September 1. On Tuesday, September 8, the Council accepted these signatures, which means the Library Trustees’ request for a 27-cent levy will be included on the November 3 ballot. Things to keep in mind as you visit with friends and see media coverage on this issue:

1) The downtown building is debt free and costs the same to run as the ’85 building. This levy is not to pay for the building.

2) There is currently no levy in place. The last levy expired in June 2014, and the City and Foundation have provided gap funding for operations until a new levy could be put on the ballot.

3) The proposed levy is for operations; it will provide approximately $1.6M in annual, designated funds to support library operations including collections and materials, replacement of the expired levy and the increased cost of maintaining the west side Ladd Library.

4) If this levy does not pass, the library’s FY17 budget will be reduced. This means there will be a loss of and/or reduced access to library services.

If you want more information on the library levy, please visit the library’s website www.CRLibrary.org/LibraryLevy. If you would like to learn more about or get involved in the levy campaign, please visit their Facebook page “Yes for CR Library” or website www.YesforCRLibrary.org.

This fall newsletter is dedicated to community collaborations the library continues to pursue and the ways your Library Foundation will support these collaborations in the coming year. It is a privilege to serve such an amazing institution, and it is my honor to work with donors like you. Your philanthropy has a direct impact on library services and programs. I hope you enjoy the stories shared herein. Thank you for your support.

Warm regards,

Charity Tyler
Executive Director
Letter from Friends

When I enter the doors of our central or west side libraries, I often ponder how they have changed to fit the times and community needs and expectations. Old-fashioned as it may seem, libraries in America continue to be a centerpiece of democracy. Libraries welcome all and help all. In many ways our libraries have become intergenerational community centers.

As a youngster, I relished books purchased at one-room school sales and added to our home library. Never would I have dreamed my current home library would live in every corner of my home. I can still smell the small library on the theatre stage during my elementary grades, which was a far cry from our children’s experiences in Cedar Rapids schools. Can you imagine planning a school seventy-five years ago that had a library as the central space? In my youth, if parents sent a note to your teacher, you were allowed to walk two blocks to the Carnegie Library during noon recess. What a great way to nurture readers.

Today, as someone nearing the big 70, I feel just as excited about the opportunities offered by my current library. It is more than selecting a book to read (although I am excited about the 300+ knitting books available). I take computer classes to enlarge my skills and world; I download audiobooks from home or check out books on CD and Playaways, so I can listen while I work; read Zinio magazines on-line; learn Norwegian through one of the many apps available; attend learning and leisure opportunities at both libraries; and enjoy a good cup of hot chai tea. I even browse and buy from the Friends Book Nooks and sales to add to my home library.

If you haven’t visited our library, do so sooner than later. It is not your mother’s library!

Read On,

Cindy Monroe
President, Friends of Cedar Rapids Public Library

Cindy Monroe
Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library Board of Directors
Cindy Monroe, President
Holly Becker, Vice President
Ben Russell, Co-Treasurer
Riley Williams, Co-Treasurer
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Debbie Schroeder, Sorting Center
Julie Stephenson, Babies & Books
Ada Van Vechten Society – Reimagined

The Ada Van Vechten Society is named for Cedar Rapids community leader and Library founder Ada Amanda Van Vechten. In 1894, Mrs. Van Vechten was one of several women who initiated a campaign to found a public library in Cedar Rapids. After much effort, the matter was brought to voters in March 1896. The measure passed, and a free public library was created. In *The First 100 Years*, a book retelling our Library’s history, it was written that “Van Vechten, whose leadership had created the free public library, would continue to care for the new institution as a mother would nurture her child.”

The Ada Van Vechten Society honors Library supporters who have made a commitment to care for and nurture the Library through planned gifts and/or annual gifts of $1,000 or more made to the Library Foundation. A person becomes eligible for membership upon receipt of written notification of the Library Foundation’s inclusion in his/her estate plans and/or when an annual gift of $1,000 or more has been received by the Foundation during its July 1 to June 30 fiscal year.

Ada Van Vechten Society members will receive an invitation to an annual recognition event, exclusive library and foundation updates, and special acknowledgements in the Foundation’s annual report and on its website. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Foundation’s Ada Van Vechten Society, please contact Charity Tyler at 319.739.0411 or via email at tylerc@crlibrary.org.

Ada Van Vechten

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We Came Bearing Gifts…

By Hannah Buettner, Americorps/VISTA at CRPL

From June 15 through August 21, my predecessor Monica and I (along with help from volunteers) visited the 5 Seasons Mobile Home Park every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. This location was targeted by Horizons, A Family Service Alliance, as an area where the majority of children are on free and reduced lunch. During the summer, Horizons provides these children with daily lunch on premise because they may not receive it otherwise. As Horizons met the children’s physical needs, the library focused on their educational needs. It was our goal to help the children in this community avoid the all too common “summer slide.” When surveyed, we found that 88% of these children were not registered for any summer reading programs, and 81% of the children were unable to attend any other library programming. Our team brought these children books to take home (donated by Friends), tablets and LeapPads to learn and explore, and a different craft each week to engage their creativity. On a typical day, we would set up our resources while the children ate their meals. Once they finished, they would eagerly run to our table in competition for the tablets and LeapPads—technology most of the children did not have access to outside our program. They were very thankful, and I was often told that they wished we could stay longer. By summer’s end, we had distributed 385 books, created 74 crafts, and gave the children access to over 4,000 minutes of tablet time! In return we received smiles, pleas for the library to return, and the joy of seeing children excited to learn.

A Special Impact

I began working the Summer Meals Outreach program in August. After I had visited the 5 Seasons site two or three times, a little girl named Sam* began to sit and eat her lunch at my table. Sam often came in without shoes and was behind in her speech, which sometimes made it difficult to understand her. Each day, she would come in and greet me, “Happy to see you today!” She was very sweet and seemed to just enjoy having someone to talk to, often singing me songs and enthusiastically explaining her day. One thing she did admit to me, within a few days of our talks was that she was afraid to start school because she knew she wasn’t able to read or write as well as her teacher would expect her to. She was near tears when she admitted this to me. It broke my heart, but it also showed me early on the value of this program. Throughout the remaining weeks I read with her when I was able, but as I was often busy helping other children, one of the most valuable tools for her was the LeapPad. Sam had never used a tablet before but with a little direction, we were able to set her up in the Clifford reading game. In this game she was able to better understand letters, rhymes, and other early reading skills. Watching Sam’s confidence in literacy grow was by far my favorite part of my work this summer. It is my hope that this program will continue to expand and reach many more children like Sam in years to come.

*Name changed for confidentiality purposes.
Focus on Foundation

How the Foundation Supports Our Library

The Library Foundation serves as the vehicle through which private funds are used to enhance the Cedar Rapids Public Library’s collections, programs, and technologies while supporting the Library’s Strategic Directions. Following are ways the Foundation is supporting our Library in fiscal year 2016.

Strategic Focus: Invest in Young Minds.

Summer Reading Program – The 2015 Summer Dare program was a reading challenge for all ages that combined weekly themed activities designed to encourage lifelong learning, intergenerational programs, and unexpected experiences. The Library had 4964 Summer Dare participants who logged over 924,000 minutes of reading during the twelve week program. The Foundation will continue to support the Library’s Summer Reading Program in FY16.

Teen Engagement – The Giacoletto Foundation has helped the Library enhance the teen-centric space known as The Union. Within The Union, teens have access to computers, music recording equipment, large drawing tablets and “cubelets,” which are used as an introduction to computer circuitry. Library staff has also created master “Maker Kits” to help teens get started on new skills. New in FY16 is a partnership with Iowa BIG to engage teens and elementary students in STEAM programs at the Library and in their schools throughout the 2015-16 school year.

Strategic Focus: Engage the Digital World.

Expanded Children’s Tablet Program – In FY16, the Foundation will grow the children’s tablet program by providing funds to purchase 90-110 new Playaway® Launchpad tablets for kids ages three to seven (preschool to 2nd grade). These tablets have pre-loaded educational games and activities, do not require an internet connection and are constructed with the durability needed in a public circulation environment. They will be available for public check out and library outreach early next year.

Enhanced Online Presence – The Library is currently updating its website to incorporate a virtual library experience utilizing way-finding tools and search engine optimization that will thoughtfully guide online visitors to the desired content and resources they want with as few barriers as possible.

Strategic Focus: Build Community.

Book Club Facilitators – The Library maintains more than 100 book club kits that are available to members of the public and its off-site book clubs. The Foundation provides funding for two, off-site book club facilitators. Since 2004, these facilitators have led book discussions at Cottage Grove Place and Meth-Wick Community.

Library Staff Development – The Foundation provides annual funds to meet the needs for Library staff professional development, appreciation and recognition. In collaboration with Metro Library Network partners, the Foundation also supports an annual library All Staff Day hosted at the Cedar Rapids Public Library.

Young Adult Librarian Molly Garrett visits with a teen in The Union.
Community Connections and Collaborations

The City of Cedar Rapids has launched a new microloan program in collaboration with the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation, Eastern Iowa Council of Governments, SCORE, Kirkwood, Small Business Development Center, and the Cedar Rapids Public Library. This new program targets women and minorities and will provide loans between $1,000 and $10,000. Reference librarians will provide an entry portal for aspiring entrepreneurs to connect and find the information needed to write a business plan, do market research, and apply for these loans. The Library Foundation is funding subscriptions to two databases (Lynda.com and ReferenceUSA.com) to support the Library’s role in the City’s new microloan program.

Family Connections Library Expands to Ladd

A collaboration between 17 partner agencies and the Cedar Rapids Public Library, the Family Connections Library creates an early childhood ‘hub’ at the Library for young children, parents and caregivers, and provides activities and services promoting healthy child development and family stability. This year, Family Connections Library is expanding its programs to Ladd Library with the generous support from the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation.

The project has also received support from Donor-Advised Funds of the Community Foundation including: The Gazette Foundation Corporate Fund, the Bloomhall Family Endowed Fund, and the Diamond V Corporate Fund. Programs offered through Family Connections Library include regular parenting classes, child care provider trainings, Healthy Child Screening Days (October 27 at Ladd and April 23, 2016 downtown), and other family-focused events. For more information and a full list of partner agencies, please visit the About Us tab on the Library website www.crlibrary.org.

Iowa Big, Teens & STEAM

In September, the Library began a new and innovative partnership with Iowa BIG, a product of community building efforts of The Gazette Companies and the Cedar Rapids Community School District. Iowa BIG provides educational, hands-on, interdisciplinary experiences for students in the Cedar Rapids Community School District, and now will also offer weekly STEAM classes, known as HackSr and HackJr, inside the walls of your Library. In collaboration with Washington High School and McKinley Middle School, Iowa BIG students will receive credit for participating in these classes, and HackSr students will become mentors for a HackZilla program offered at Johnson Elementary STEAM Academy. The Library’s partnership with Iowa BIG is made possible by the Giacoletto Foundation.
Focus on Friends

The Summer of 2015: A Summer of Sales!
Despite the usual challenges of second-guessing the weather, CRPL Friends continued the tradition of book selling on the Saturdays of downtown Farmers Markets. On the main library’s spacious plaza at the north-side entrance, Friends provided tables upon tables of books for browsing and purchase. If the weather didn’t cooperate, tables were moved under the building’s overhang, or completely moved inside. Either way, hundreds of books were sold, and proceeds enable Friends to continue their support of CRPL literacy programs.

Baseball and Books – A Winning Combination for Corridor Kids
This summer marked the 15th year of the Cedar Rapids Kernels’ Summer Reading Program and the CRPL Friends were happy to help out. With a goal of stimulating the minds and imaginations of kids in the corridor by encouraging reading throughout the spring and summer, Mr. Shucks (the Kernels’ mascot) and Kernels players visited dozens of area elementary schools. Participating students were rewarded with prizes for various levels marking how much time they spent reading. Levels ranged from 250 minutes to 1,000 minutes. At summer’s end, Friends volunteers were on hand to distribute free books to the participants.
A Labor of Love on Labor Day

On Labor Day 2015, hundreds of union members and their families gathered for the annual Hawkeye Labor Council AFL-CIO picnic at Hawkeye Downs. Volunteers with CRPL Friends and CRPL Foundation were proud to be present to thank them their work by distributing close to 1,000 free books. Friends President Cindy Monroe arrived extra early for set-up and made sure everything was in place when the doors opened.

Because of a visit by a leading presidential candidate at the picnic, the turn-out was bigger than expected. According to Monroe, “Nothing could have pleased us more. We brought a big stock of books for the give-away and wanted to get them into the hands of eager readers.”

In addition to the book give-away, volunteers shared information about the upcoming Our Library, Our Community levy and were able to recruit additional volunteers to help get out the vote on November 3. Remember, YES!=SMART.
Outside the Lines

The Cedar Rapids Public Library once again participated in a bold new campaign designed to reintroduce the library to the community and get people thinking – and talking – about the library in a whole new way. Outside the Lines, a weeklong celebration, September 13-19, 2015, demonstrating the creativity and innovation happening in libraries, is a call to action for libraries across the country. During Outside the Lines, libraries from across the U.S. and Canada hosted either an event or campaign that helped people understand how libraries have changed into dynamic centers for engagement and are more relevant than ever to people’s lives.

In 2014, the Cedar Rapids Public Library participated with a public art project created with the help of the community. The public created unique pieces of art out of specially designed coasters that had been distributed throughout the city. Each individual coaster was combined to create one large art installation at the downtown library. The program was highly successful and garnered national attention through the Outside the Lines initiative.

This year, the program expanded with a new coaster design and additional distribution sites throughout the community. They were strategically distributed around both the Ladd Library and the Downtown Library. The coasters were picked up on September 21, and the community art installation will be on display at the Downtown Library throughout October.

The second Outside the Lines initiative is the Pop Up Library! Library staff was ready to get outside library doors and meet the public wherever they are gathering or passing by. Pop Up libraries began surprising the community by popping up with a librarian at a variety of locations—downtown, in the NewBo City Market, at Noelridge Park, and throughout the community. The librarian was ready to answer reference questions, show off the library’s electronic resources and databases, sign people up for a library card, and explain what the library has to offer.

Reference Librarian Yongan Wu answered questions in our Pop Up Library at NewBo Market.
Library Card Sign Up Month

September is National Library Card Sign-up Month, a time when the Cedar Rapids Public Library joins with the American Library Association and public libraries nationwide to make sure that every community member has the most import resource of all – a free library card.

This year library staff and volunteers ventured out into three separate neighborhoods to get people signed up for a library card. This door-to-door service allows the library to connect with individuals and families who may never think to come to the library. By coming to them and meeting people where they are, it gives the library a chance to demonstrate what’s happening and all of the resources available to everyone. All you need is a library card!

New Library Cards

The Cedar Rapids Public Library, along with the Hiawatha and Marion public libraries, decided that National Library Card Month was the perfect opportunity to unveil new library cards and a new Metro Library Network logo.

The new logo is based on the three cities, creating a triangular zone of service in the metro area. The new library cards are also more modern and will allow the public to connect their library card to their personality in a whole new way. Three different designs are available to choose from. Each comes with a wallet card and a key card.

Cedar Rapids Public Library card holders are able to get a new library card at no cost until the end of the year. (Marion and Hiawatha libraries will have new cards available in the future.)
2015 Book Sales – Proceeds Benefit CRPL FRIENDS

Vintage Book Sale
Friday, October 9, noon to 8 PM
Saturday, October 10, 9 AM to 3 PM
Beems Auditorium, Main Library
$5 Admission

Very Cherry Holiday Book Sale
Saturday, December 5, 10 AM to 5 PM
Sunday, December 6, 9 AM to 3 PM
The Cherry Building – in the New Bo District
329 Tenth Avenue SE
Free Admission

Upcoming CRPL Events*

Family History Research Help Session
October 13 @ 7 pm, Tech Learning Center
Adults, Teens

Basic Computer Skills Part 1
November 4 @ 10 am, Tech Learning Center
Adults

Stories for Scooters @ Ladd
October 15 @ 9:30 am, Community Room
Pre-K

Basic Computer Skills Part 2
November 18 @ 10 am, Tech Learning Center
Adults

Zombiepalooza
October 17 @ 6 pm, Beems Auditorium
Teens

Dance Me a Story: Cinderella
November 19 @ 9:30 am, Beems Auditorium
Pre-K, Elementary

*For more information and a complete listing of CRPL events, please visit www.crlibrary.org.