Focus

The newsletter for Friends and the Foundation of the Cedar Rapids Public Library

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Mission

Friends supports the CRPL mission and vision and promotes literacy through community outreach.

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.

Cedar Rapids Public Library
Downtown Branch • 450 5th Ave SE • Cedar Rapids • Iowa 52401
Ladd Branch • 3750 Williams Blvd SW • Cedar Rapids • Iowa 52404
Focus on
Foundation - www.crlibrary.org/foundation

Letter from the Foundation

Over the past several months, Library leadership has made very tough decisions. One thing they have not sacrificed, however, is our Library’s commitment to serve the public and meet our community’s needs. Library staff and leadership continue to provide dedicated service to nearly 2,000 visitors on a daily basis.

As our Library continues these efforts, your Library Foundation is looking for new and creative ways to support Library programs and services. Here are some of our current projects:

• A new initiative implemented in December is the Library Champion Program. It’s an opportunity for businesses and organizations to provide annual support for the Library Foundation. Learn more about this program on page 6.

• In February, we increased communications by adding a monthly eNewsletter. These emails are sent on the first Thursday of each month and include three sections covering topics from stories of philanthropic impact to Library and Foundation history to the Endow Iowa Tax Credit Program. If you’re not currently receiving our eNewsletter and would like to subscribe, please email us at foundation@crlibrary.org and request to be added to the list.

• Our Library Foundation board has been busy looking to the future. Strategic planning efforts are in full swing, and we hope to share more about our new strategic priorities in the coming months.

As we all look forward to the summer, one item to put on your “must do” list is participate in the Library’s Summer Dare. A sneak peek at this year’s program is found on page 10.

The Foundation’s support of Library programs like Summer Dare wouldn’t be possible without you, our friends and donors. Your generosity allows the Library Foundation to advance our Library and its efforts to impact our community.

Together, we are making a difference every day. Thank you.

Have a wonderful Spring and Summer!

Warm regards,

Charity D. Tyler
Executive Director

Letter from Friends

The more things change, the more they stay the same. That adage certainly describes life at our public library and the role that CRPL Friends plays.

While the hours of service at both library locations are the most visible change the public will see, the amount of financial support from CRPL Friends has not diminished. To the contrary, it has grown.

You’ll see in our plan for the future of CRPL Friends (page 11) an intentional focus on engaging more volunteers in our Friends organization and identifying more ways to sell more books—especially through internet sales.

If you are at a stage in your life that you’d like to become involved with CRPL Friends, we welcome you.

The sorting centers need more sorters. (page 9) This volunteer opportunity has flexible hours and offers a first look at books before they go on sale to the general public.

If you are an experienced online seller or buyer (think eBay) then your help would be a boon to our internet sales.

And those are just two of the many ways to be involved with Friends.

If you love your public library, why not be a real Friend and join us?!

In appreciation,

Cindy Monroe
President, Friends of Cedar Rapids Public Library

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Public Library
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Charity Tyler

Cindy Monroe
Launchpads Take Off!

On January 28, our Library announced the release of a new tablet designed to meet the needs of our youngest customers: Launchpads. Launchpads are made possible by the Library Foundation with a grant from ITC Holdings Corp.

Launchpads, a kid-friendly tablet designed for libraries to lend, come preloaded with fun, educational apps that allow children to practice literacy, math and motor skills. The apps are specially designed for children ages 3-7.

Here are some other fun facts!

- Launchpads do not require an internet or Wi-Fi connection, making them accessible to everyone in our community.
- There are 102 Launchpad tablets in our collection; each comes with 10 educational apps.
- Launchpads are available for checkout at the Downtown Library only.

Checkout Guidelines:

- Individuals must be a card holder in good standing and with all privileges for at least three months.
- The card holder must present the card at time of checkout.
- Only one tablet can be checked out per card, renewable up to two times.
- Checkout period is 14 days.
- Tablets may be placed on hold.

The Library Foundation is grateful to have ITC as an engaged partner helping our Library serve the youngest members of our community.

About ITC Holdings Corp.

ITC Holdings Corp. (NYSE: ITC) is the nation’s largest independent electric transmission company. ITC owns and operates high-voltage transmission facilities in Michigan, Iowa, Minnesota, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma, serving a combined peak load exceeding 26,000 megawatts along approximately 15,600 circuit miles of transmission line.

Carolyn Steffen, age 7 of Cedar Rapids, teaches her 91-year-old great-grandmother Helen Steffen from Erieville, MO how to use a Launchpad tablet.

Family Connections Library Making a Difference

Last month, I took a call that exemplified how Family Connections Library is beneficial to families and our community. It was a woman in Missouri looking for child care resources for her daughter and baby granddaughter who recently moved to the area and had limited funds. The daughter had been approved for $19 in food assistance from DHS, and that wasn’t going to be enough. Plus, they needed child care for a 14-month old as soon as possible, so the daughter wouldn’t be in danger of losing her new job.

I gave the woman information about WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) for food resources and shared the phone number and location of the Marion WIC clinic (closest to the daughter’s new address). Then, I mentioned that her daughter could apply for Early Head Start (EHS) for her granddaughter, and that the application could be picked up at the WIC clinic. I was also able to share information about Child Care Resource & Referral in case EHS wasn’t able to meet her needs.

After talking a bit more, I learned the daughter needs help and support parenting. For this, I used Family Connections partner knowledge to suggest the daughter contact Young Parents Network for parenting support, Parent Education Consortium for parenting guidance, and Play & Learn for free activities where she could meet other parents. I was able to easily give program contact names, locations and websites for the woman to review. At the end of the 15 minute conversation, the woman was so grateful to talk with someone who knew about all these resources, was able to talk about each one, answer questions and didn’t just transfer her along. The call ended with the woman happier and less worried about her daughter and granddaughter living away from home.

I believe this example embodies what we are striving to do with the Family Connections Library. This partnership is more than providing events for families to learn and have something to do at the library. It has created a stronger network that better connects families with services needed to remain healthy and happy (regardless of a family’s point of entry location). Family Connections Library is events and services paired with strong alliances among FCL partners that allow more seamless assistance to others.

Amy Becker
Coordinator, Family Connections Library

A collaboration between 17 partner agencies and the Cedar Rapids Public Library, the Family Connections Library (FCL) 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. Programs offered through Family Connections Library include regular parenting classes, childcare provider trainings, Healthy Child Screening Days (April 23, 2018), and other family-focused events. This year, Family Connections Library expanded its programs to Ladd with the generous support from the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation. The project 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. You can learn more about FCL by visiting www.crlibrary.org/about-us/family-connections-library/
Library Champions Program

The Foundation’s new Library Champion Program offers an opportunity for local organizations to support Library programs and services that would not be possible without philanthropic funding. Contributions to the Library Foundation support the Library’s efforts to impact our community and transform quality of life through education, civic engagement, the arts and entertainment.

Annual gifts through the Foundation’s Library Champion Program are essential for the Foundation’s ability to advance the Library’s mission as a passionate advocate for literacy and lifelong learning. All Library Champions receive the following:

1) Library Champion window cling to be proudly displayed,
2) Recognition on the Foundation’s website, and
3) Recognition in the Library Foundation’s annual report.

Other opportunities for recognition are available based on level of annual support. Please visit the Library Foundation website (www.crlibrary.org/about-us/foundation) to learn more.

Launched in December, the program already boasts a great group of more than 20 Library Champions. We sincerely appreciate those organizations listed below that are supporting the Library Foundation with gifts of $2,500 or more.*

Cargill
Giacotto Foundation
Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation
Hills Bank & Trust Company
ITC Holdings Corp
Transamerica Foundation
United Fire Group
US Bank
Wells Fargo

*For a full list of Library Champions, please visit the Library Foundation website.

A Message from Library Trustees: Our Library’s New Chapter

This guest editorial from the Library Board of Trustees originally appeared in the Wednesday, March 9 issue of The Gazette.

The Cedar Rapids Public Library is a vital part of our city and every day helps to transform the lives of our citizens. The library is open to everyone. It is a community hub, providing unfettered access to information, technology, and a vibrant collection of books, music, movies, and more. It is a safe place in our community in which all people can come together to learn, gather, collaborate, innovate, and share, without judgment and without barriers.

Our library statistics tell a wonderful story of literacy, unity, and community-building in our city. We have seen record library usage since opening both the Ladd Library and the Downtown Library in 2013. We see thousands of people each month gathering in our civic spaces. We have the highest circulation in the state. We know that our community uses our libraries more than ever before and that the work being done each day is changing lives.

The Board of Trustees has worked with library patrons, staff, and key stakeholders to develop a new strategic plan which will lead us into the future. We have identified three objectives in which we feel the library can have the greatest impact: invest in young minds, transform lives, and engage and strengthen community. The library has a unique role in our city and looks forward to seizing the opportunity to make significant strides towards meeting these goals.

Beginning March 27, the library will be reducing hours, decreasing programs and purchasing fewer materials in order to meet a new budget that is notably less than prior years. The library staff and trustees examined usage numbers for circulation, door count, computer use, and program attendance to make these decisions. We also collected anecdotal evidence from staff, partners, and patrons. We have balanced significant reductions while minimizing impact to the public doing everything possible to reduce costs while not losing sight of the mission, vision, and values.

While these changes to library service do not come without an impact, they are not the end of our story. We are ready for the next chapter in library service in Cedar Rapids. We have already begun to identify new opportunities for community engagement. We continue to develop partnerships that will allow us to invest in young minds in significant and resourceful ways. While the number of programs we do may be reduced, the programs themselves will continue to be innovative, educational, and transformative.

A library is a reflection of a community. We believe that Cedar Rapids deserves to have a world class library for all citizens. With our strategic objectives in place, we believe that our impact on our community can be greater than ever before. We look forward to writing the next chapter of our story together.
Annual Out Loud! Authors Announced
The Metro Library Network Author Series Out Loud! is thrilled to present another season of outstanding authors in 2016. The collaborative program of the Cedar Rapids, Hiawatha, and Marion Public Libraries will present Sara Gruen, Matt de la Peña, and Jenny Lawson in free events at the The Hotel at Kirkwood Center.

Sara Gruen
Young adult author Matt de la Peña will continue the series on Friday, July 1, at 7 p.m. Matt de la Peña is the New York Times bestselling, Newbery Medal-winning author of six young adult novels: Ball Don’t Lie, Mexican WhiteBoy, We Were Here, I Will Save You, The Living, and The Hunted. He’s also the author of the critically-acclaimed picture books A Nation’s Hope: The Story of Boxing Legend Joe Louis (illustrated by Kadir Nelson) and Last Stop on Market Street (illustrated by Christian Robinson). de la Peña currently lives in Brooklyn NY. He teaches creative writing and visits high schools and colleges throughout the country.

Matt de la Peña

The series will end with #1 New York Times bestselling author Jenny Lawson, best known as “The Bloggess,” on Friday, July 8, at 7 p.m. Known for her sardonic wit and her hysterically skewed outlook on life, Lawson has made millions of people question their own sanity. Lawson’s blog (TheBloggess.com) is award-winning and extremely popular, seeing more than half a million page-views per day. She is also the author of two books: Let’s Pretend This Never Happened (A Mostly True Memoir), which won Goodreads’ Best Humor Book of 2012 and was chosen as one of Hudson Bookseller’s Best Books of 2012; and Furiously Happy, a comical and emotional exploration of her lifelong battle with mental illness.

Jenny Lawson

While no tickets are required, series organizers are requesting pre-registration. To register, visit www.metrolibrarnetwork.org/outloud and select the author event you wish to attend. Alternately, patrons may contact any of the Metro Libraries or send an email to events@crlibrary.org.

All Out Loud! authors will take questions from the audience and sign books following their presentations.

OUT LOUD! The Metro Library Network Author Series is supported by the Giacoletto Foundation with media support from The Gazette and event book sales provided by Barnes & Noble Booksellers. Additional support comes from the Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library, Friends of the Hiawatha Public Library, Friends of the Marion Public Library, Hills Bank and Trust Company, and Nancy and Steve Miller.

Volunteers help sort donated items
Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library has dedicated space in downtown facility
By Katie Mills Giorgio, correspondent

For decades, the group Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library has supported programs, and promoted literacy and community outreach, through sales of donated books.

These days, Debbie Schroeder and Jan Frischkorn are the go-to ladies when it comes to sorting those books. “This is our life blood,” Frischkorn said, “... people donating books so others can buy them helps us to support library programs like Jazz in the Stacks and the summer reading program. People like donating their books because they know they are furthering the reading of another.”

“We have volunteers who adopt shelves,” Schroeder said. “They take over an area of expertise, such as cookbooks, children’s books or mystery and thrillers, and place them on custom rolling shelves to prepare us for sales.”

While group members still maintain storage space in the basement of the Cherry Building — where they’ve long done sorting and have hosted their last few book sales — the majority of their sorting now happens in back office space at the downtown library. “The Friends had never had dedicated space in the library before,” Schroeder said, “but when they were planning for the new library they felt it was important for us to be a part of it and have a presence here.”

The women agreed having the space has made the sorting process much more efficient and easier for patrons interested in donating books. “Patrons can just drop their donated books in the book drops,” Frischkorn said. “This setup helps us to be able to find what patrons, the library staff, and agencies need. Books don’t sit packed away in boxes. It’s just a thrill to come in here and see what has been donated.”

Both women said that working as a volunteer book sorter for the Friends organization is a very flexible commitment. “We have a local Realtor who comes in and helps sort on her days when she isn’t busy. And then we have regular volunteers who come in every day of the week for a certain amount of time,” Schroeder said.

There are about 15 to 20 regular sorting volunteers, and Schroeder said they’d be happy to add more to their team, as well as volunteers willing to help work at book sales. “That’s definitely a huge need as we are sitting on a lot of books,” Schroeder said. “We try so hard to find a home for every book that is donated our way.”

In 2015, the organization donated more than 9,000 books to more than 50 community organizations and schools. FOR MORE INFORMATION For more information about Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library or to learn about becoming a volunteer. www.crlibrary.org/about-us/friends-of-the-library.
Sneak Peek: 2016 Summer Dare

This is #notyouraveragelibrary. This is not your average library summer reading program. This is adventurous. This is daring. This is different. This is for you. This is #2016summerdare - and this is summer learning at its finest.

From June 6-July 31, we have a reading challenge for all ages, weekly themed activities designed to encourage lifelong learning, intergenerational programs, and unexpected experiences waiting for you at the library. Pick up a summer dare guide at the Dare Desk of either library location or visit our website (www.crlibrary.org) to get registered. Each participant receives a journal and a free book (or coupon for a free Friends Book Nook book) simply for registering. Read 300 minutes and complete eight dares throughout the eight weeks and you will have completed the program. Visit the library after you’ve completed the program and receive a second free book.

Stop by either library location throughout the eight weeks and log your reading time, pick up a special incentive for visiting, and check out one of the many programs offered weekly. Additional program information may be found in our monthly event calendar in print or online at www.CRLibrary.org. You’ll also get to add to our Dare Drop throughout the summer each time you record your progress.

The Summer Dare Program is sponsored by Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library, Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation and Hills Bank & Trust Company.

Friends’ strategic planning sessions includes updated mission

Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library’s board members joined CRPL Foundation board members and CRPL trustees on January 21, 2016, for a joint planning session led by Heather Woody. Each of the three groups spent time discussing strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results. And all were encouraged to develop a mission statement that aligned with the Cedar Rapids Public Library mission. Friends’ existing mission statement was simplified to read as follows: Friends supports the CRPL mission and vision and promotes literacy through community outreach.

With that mission as their guide, Friends board members then agreed on three strategic objectives and tactics:

1. Utilize and engage more Friends members in more ways
   a. Make phone contact with all Friends members & volunteers
   b. Based on calls, plan and execute engagement ASAP
   c. Support and recognize volunteers with camaraderie events
   d. Ensure all previous inquiries are included

2. Re-visit current board structure, setting priorities based on program relevancy, identifying individual board members’ skills for optimum utilization of same
   a. Devote February board meeting to this discussion of structure and programs, including updating job descriptions for officers and program heads
   b. Recruit new board members based on needed positions, providing clear explanation of expectations and duties

3. Be intentional in seeking out opportunities for presence at events and locations for general visibility and to sell or give away books
   a. Establish a task force to identify opportunities for presence, selling and visibility with the task force reporting monthly at board meetings
   b. Include internet sales as an ongoing opportunity for sales

Bag Buddies: Friends partners with UnityPoint for new book bags

Anyone who spends time at the Book Nook at Ladd Library or the downtown library has noticed colorful book bags for sale at just $1 per bag. Making bags available for patrons to buy has been more of a service than a money maker. Just ask Greer Fry, long-time Friends volunteer who’s in charge of keeping the bag supply current. “Depending on what I can find on sale at the time I order more bags, we cover our costs most of the time, but not always.” Thanks to a partnership with UnityPoint, the cost of the bags is covered and the proceeds from bag sales can go directly into supporting literacy and community outreach. A tip of the hat to our friends at UnityPoint!
FRIENDS of the Library Book Sales

**Saturday, May 7:** First Saturday Sale, main library lobby
**Saturday, June 4:** Farmers Market Sale, main library plaza
**Saturday, June 18:** Farmers Market Sale, main library plaza
**Saturday, July 2:** Farmers Market Sale, main library plaza
**Saturday, July 16:** Farmers Market Sale, main library plaza
**Saturday, August 6:** Farmers Market Sale, main library plaza
**Saturday, August 20:** Farmers Market Sale, main library plaza
**Friday/Saturday/Sunday, November 4 - 6:** Big Fall Sale, Cherry Building
**Saturday, December 3:** Very Cherry Holiday Sale, Cherry Building

**Upcoming CRPL Events***

**Healthy Child Screening Day**
April 23, 9 am to 1 pm
Downtown Branch

**Horizons Masters of Money Mini-Golf**
April 23, 10 am to 4 pm
Downtown Branch

**Summer Dare Kickoff Party**
June 5, 1 pm to 5 pm
Ladd Library Parking Lot

**Out Loud!**
*The Hotel at Kirkwood Center*
June 24 @ 7 pm, Sara Gruen
July 1 @ 7 pm, Matt de la Peña
July 8 @ 7 pm, Jenny Lawson

**Summer Dare Celebration**
July 30, 10 am to Noon
Greene Square

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