Focus

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

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Cedar Rapids Public Library
Downtown Library • 450 5th Ave SE • Cedar Rapids • Iowa 52401
Ladd Library • 3750 Williams Blvd SW • Cedar Rapids • Iowa 52404

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

Mission
The Foundation mobilizes community resources and relationships that empower our Library to deliver innovative programs and services.

Cedar Rapids Public Library National Medal Finalist!
Letter from the Foundation

Any book that helps a child to form a habit of reading,
to make reading one of his deep and continuing needs,is good for him. - Maya Angelou

For my children, "Mommy's Library," as they like to call it, is an adventure that allows them to explore imaginary worlds with fictional characters and play on computers with programs designed especially for them. At the core, however, their love for this library lies within its books.

Over the past year, I’ve shared many statistics that are frightening, yet real, about childhood literacy and the lack of books for children in low-income neighborhoods. Our community is investing in several initiatives that support grade-level reading, and the Library is a strong partner adding to the collaborative nature of these efforts. This issue of Focus highlights just a few of the ways our Library is making an impact and creating opportunities to put books in the hands of community members of all ages.

This issue also celebrates national recognition achieved through community service and outreach. The National Medal for Museum and Library Service is the highest honor bestowed on libraries and museums in the United States, and we are so very proud to be named a finalist for this award. Additionally, in January, our 2016 Summer Dare Everywhere program received the national Penguin Random House Award for Library Innovation.

As they say, our Library is not your average library, and I am thankful every day for the leadership, staff, and volunteers who impact our community through truly innovative Library programs and services.

Please know that your gifts impact our Library’s success too. Without your contributions, much of what is outlined in this newsletter would not be possible. Thank you for your continued support.

All my best,
Charity D. Tyler
Executive Director

Letter from Friends

Yes, the partner list is a long one and you, as a reader of this newsletter, are one of many partners who understands the important role our library plays in the complete health of our community.

Just like Neil Gaiman says in "Why our future depends on libraries, reading and daydreaming" on page 9 of this newsletter, "In the 21st century people misunderstand what libraries are and the purpose of them. If you do not value libraries then you do not value information or culture or wisdom."

Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library values those who help enable us to support the library.

Thanks, partners.

Cindy Monroe
President, Friends of Cedar Rapids Public Library
Our Library’s Community Impact

By Dara Schmidt and Amber Mussman

The Cedar Rapids Public Library (CRPL) serves the 126,326 citizens of Cedar Rapids as well as several surrounding Linn County, Iowa cities, with an overall population served of nearly 250,000. As the second largest city in Iowa, Cedar Rapids draws from a rural population who work and play in our city. The CRPL shares resources seamlessly with two neighboring libraries (Marion Public Library and Hiawatha Public Library) through a unified electronic catalog, with materials courier service between libraries, and shared access to online databases and collaborative program offerings.

While the Library exists to impact all community members, there is power in focusing efforts to maximize impact. Over the past several years, the CRPL implemented a process to connect with all levels of the community and identify the areas of greatest need. Following strategies from the Aspen Institute, the Library used public surveys, open houses, meetings with partner organizations and city leaders, and small group conversations to gather feedback from stakeholders. By identifying what makes people most proud of the community, their hopes and dreams, and what they wish would improve, the CRPL was able to clearly define where the Library could have the most impact.

CRPL has become a community driven library. Staff create programs, opportunities, and experiences that fill the greatest need. But CRPL is also patron-driven in the true participatory sense: patrons come to the library with their passion and ideas, and the library says yes. Programs, meetings, recitals, Corridor Autism Expo, conversations about the heroin epidemic, opera performances, cooking classes, salsa dancing, weddings, Tuba Christmas, and anything else the community can imagine happens every day. The library has stepped in to be the place for things that have no other place. CRPL is a true participatory library.

Through these conversations, the Library’s strategic plan was formed to focus on key areas of need:

- Invest in Young Minds by improving early childhood literacy,
- Engage and Strengthen Community by becoming a participatory library that acts as a community catalyst, and
- Transform Lives through education and self-empowerment.

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Call to Action

Leading up to the announcement of the ten National Medal winners, our Library and the IMLS are asking community members to share their Cedar Rapids Public Library story by posting on the IMLS Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages: www.facebook.com/USIMLS, Instagram/Twitter @US_IMLS.

About the IMLS

IMLS is a government agency that is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums. To see the full list of finalists and learn more about the National Medal, visit www.imls.gov/2017-medals

Focus on Foundation

Library Named as Finalist for IMLS National Medal

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) announced on Monday, March 20 that the Cedar Rapids Public Library is among 30 finalists for the 2017 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. The National Medal is the nation’s highest honor given to museums and libraries for service to the community. For 23 years, the award has celebrated institutions that demonstrate extraordinary and innovative approaches to public service and are making a difference for individuals, families and communities.

“The 2017 National Medal Finalists represent the leading museums and libraries that serve as catalysts for change in their communities,” said Dr. Kathryn K. Matthew, director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. “It is our honor to recognize 30 notable institutions for their commitment to providing programs and services that improve the lives of individuals, families and communities. We salute them and their valuable work in providing educational opportunities to their community and celebrate the power libraries and museums can have across the country.”

The 30 finalists include 15 museums and 15 libraries. Later this spring, five museums and five libraries will be announced as National Medal winners, and representatives of these ten institutions will be recognized during a ceremony in Washington, DC.

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10th Annual Out Loud!
Author Series to Feature Perry, Alexander, and Macomber

Out Loud! The Metro Library Network Author Series is thrilled to celebrate its tenth season in 2017 with a wonderful line up of authors. The collaborative program of the Cedar Rapids, Hiawatha, and Marion Public Libraries will present Anne Perry, Kwame Alexander, and Debbie Macomber on three consecutive Friday nights in June at The Hotel at Kirkwood Center.

The series will kick off with Anne Perry on Friday, June 9 at 7 p.m. Perry is the international bestselling author of over fifty novels, which have sold over 25 million copies. The Times selected her as one of the 20th Century's 100 Masters of Crime. In 2015, she was awarded the Premio de Honor Aragón Negro. Her first series of Victorian crime novels, featuring Thomas and Charlotte Pitt, began with The Cater Street Hangman. The latest of these, The Angel Court Affair, is her most recent of many appearances on the New York Times bestseller list.

Author Kwame Alexander will continue the series on Friday, June 16, at 7 p.m. Alexander is a poet, educator, and the New York Times bestselling author of 24 books, including The Crossover, which received the 2015 John Newbery Medal for the Most Distinguished Contribution to American Literature for Children, the Coretta Scott King Author Award Honor, The NCTE Charlotte Huck Honor, the Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award, and the Paterson Poetry Prize. Alexander writes for children of all ages. Some of his other works include The Playbook: 52 Rules to Help You Aim, Shoot, and Score in This Game of Life; the picture books, Animal Ark, Out of Wonder and Surf’s Up; and novels Booked, He Said She Said, and the forthcoming Solo.

The series will end with #1 New York Times bestselling author Debbie Macomber on Friday, June 23, at 7 p.m. Macomber is one of today’s most popular writers with more than 200 million copies of her books in print worldwide. In her novels, Macomber brings to life compelling relationships that embrace family and enduring friendships, uplifting her readers with stories of connection and hope. Macomber’s novels have spent over 990 weeks on the New York Times bestseller list. Twelve of these novels hit the number one spot.

In 2017, Macomber’s all-new hardcover publications include If Not for You (March), Any Dream Will Do (August), and Merry and Bright (October). In addition to fiction, Macomber has also published two bestselling cookbooks, an adult coloring book, numerous inspirational and nonfiction works, and two acclaimed children’s books.

While no tickets are required, series organizers are requesting pre-registration. To register, visit www.metrolibrarynetwork.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. More information about the Out Loud! Author Series is available at www.metrolibrarynetwork.org/outloud.

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 Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation, Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library, Friends of the Hiawatha Public Library, Friends of the Marion Public Library, Hill’s Bank and Trust Company, and Nancy and Steve Miller.

One 2 Read Launches in Metro Area
All metro second graders given same book to read

The Cedar Rapids Public Library and Reading into Success partnered to present the first One 2 Read program for metro second grade students. The local One 2 Read initiative is a “one-book project” for all metro area 2nd graders. Each second grader in College Community, Cedar Rapids Community, Linn-Mar and Marion school districts received a free copy of the book “Pete the Cat and his Groovy Buttons,” by author Eric Litwin.

“The goal is to increase the number of proficient readers in third grade in all schools,” said Kevin Delecki, Program Manager at the Cedar Rapids Public Library. "Having author visits, book distribution, and programs across the metro area will give students, parents, and inspired adults the opportunity to bring the joy of reading and the excitement of story to life. We hope this will become an annual event that continues to grow and provide more opportunities for the community to engage with our young readers.”

Litwin performed for second graders on April 4 and 5, offering students an opportunity to hear from the author in person. Litwin also made two appearances at the Cedar Rapids Public Library on the evening of April 4 which were open to the public.

One 2 Read is sponsored by the Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library and Friends of the Marion Public Library.
Focus on Friends

How you can be a friend to your public library

1. Donate used books. Drop them in the book return slot at the Downtown Library or the Ladd Library on the west side.
3. Join the board. The Friends board welcomes new board members every year.
5. Get a library card. This is your passport to a whole new world.
6. Vote! Your library counts on engaged citizens who support the library.

Why our future depends on libraries, reading and daydreaming

Excerpts from a speech by Neil Gaiman

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Fiction is the gateway drug to reading. The drive to know what happens next, to want to turn the page, the need to keep going, even if it’s hard, because someone’s in trouble and you have to know how it’s all going to end … that’s a very real drive. And it forces you to learn new words, to think new thoughts, to keep going. The simplest way to make sure that we raise literate children is to teach them to read, and to show them that reading is a pleasurable activity. And that means, at its simplest, finding books that they enjoy, giving them access to those books, and letting them read them.

Fiction builds empathy. When you watch TV or see a film, you are looking at things happening to other people. Prose fiction is something you build up from 26 letters and a handful of punctuation marks, and you, and you alone, using your imagination, create a world and people it and look out through other eyes. You get to feel things, visit places and worlds you would never otherwise know. You learn that everyone else out there is a me, as well. You’re being someone else, and when you return to your own world, you’re going to be slightly changed.

Libraries are about freedom. Freedom to read, freedom of ideas, freedom of communication. They are about education (which is not a process that finishes the day we leave school or university), about entertainment, about making safe spaces, and about access to information.

In the 21st century people misunderstand what libraries are and the purpose of them. If you perceive a library as a shell of books, it may seem antiquated or outdated in a world in which most, but not all, books in print exist digitally. Libraries are places that people go to for information. Books are only the tip of the information iceberg: they are there, and libraries can provide you freely and legally with books.

Literacy is more important than ever it was. In this world of text and email, (we are) a world of written information. We need to read and write, we need global citizens who can read comfortably, comprehend what they are reading, understand nuance, and make themselves understood. Libraries really are the gates to the future.

Books are the way that we communicate with the dead. The way that we learn lessons from those who are no longer with us, that humanity has built on itself, progressed, made knowledge incremental rather than something that has to be relearned, over and over. There are tales that are older than most countries, tales that have long outlasted the cultures and the buildings in which they were first told.

We have an obligation to tell our politicians what we want, to vote against politicians of whatever party who do not understand the value of reading in creating worthwhile citizens, who do not want to act to preserve and protect knowledge and encourage literacy. This is not a matter of party politics. This is a matter of common humanity.

Albert Einstein was asked once how we could make our children intelligent. His reply was both simple and wise. "If you want your children to be intelligent," he said, "read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales." He understood the value of reading, and of imagining. I hope we can give our children a world in which they will read, and be read to, and imagine, and understand.

Neil Gaiman is an English author of short fiction, novels, comic books, graphic novels, audio theatre, and films. He lives with his family in Minneapolis, MN.
Summer Dare Everywhere: Take 2

Last summer, the Cedar Rapids Public Library piloted a new summer reading outreach program, Summer Dare Everywhere, with the Cedar Rapids Metro YMCA. The program brought the library to youth who had barriers accessing library resources and programs. The four volunteers who helped launch this program made weekly visits to two YMCA sites to bring books, crafts, tablets, and activities to children ages 5–12 who attend YMCA’s summer childcare camp. During the pilot program, volunteers delivered more than 675 books. Without these volunteers expanding the library beyond its walls, this program wouldn’t have been possible and youth would have been far underserved. The volunteers were resourceful and flexible in helping the library develop the program and were instrumental to its success. This program went on to receive a national Penguin Random House Library Award for Innovation in January. The award included a $1,000 grant and an additional $1,000 book donation to the library.

In 2017, our Library’s award-winning Summer Dare Everywhere program will mark its second season with growth and change. This year’s YMCA partnership is growing by 150% with the addition of Jane Boyd’s summer program participants at three different sites. Additionally, Kids on Course will expand its partnership by bringing each of their students on a field trip to the Library. They also plan to continue participating in the Summer Dare reading program as part of their Kids on Course University curriculum.

Family Caregivers Center of Mercy will partner with our Library to develop a list of narrative books that family caregivers can read to the individuals for whom they care that have chronic conditions like Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, cancer, diabetes, etc. Inter-Religious Council of Linn County is exploring opportunities to encourage and educate on religious literacy in our community.

It’s easy to get involved. Simply visit our Library’s website at www.crlibrary.org/takeonliteracy to register. The Take On Literacy page offers a menu where you can choose an option or create your own unique way to introduce reading and literacy into what you do.

The Cedar Rapids Public Library challenges you to TAKE ON LITERACY in 2017! Join us in our 120th year as we connect with the community to find unique and inspiring ways to create a culture of literacy in Cedar Rapids.

In our area:
• More than 1 in 4 third graders do not read proficiently at the end of third grade. This increases to more than 1 in 3 for low income students.
• Students who are not proficient are 4 times more likely to not graduate on time, which increases to 13 times if they are also from a low income household.

The Library’s goal is to have 120 businesses and organizations participate in the challenge in 2017, its 120th year of public service. Iowa City is a UNESCO City of Literature, and we want to make Cedar Rapids the City of Literacy!

Examples from organizations who have already registered to participate include:
Cedar Rapids Roughriders’ reading program encourages classrooms to read a certain number of minutes. When the goal is reached, members of the Roughriders hockey team join the children at their school to play during recess.

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Thank you to our 2017 Library Champions!

Alliant Energy Bankers Trust Car-gill Giaocetto Foundation Hawkeye Convenience Stores Hills Bank & Trust Company ITC Holdings Corp United Fire Group US Bank

For a full list of 2017 Library Champions, please visit the Library Foundation website.

Library Champion participation starts at the $500 gift level. Please call the Foundation at 319-239-0411 if you would like to learn how your organization can become a Library Champion today!

The Foundation’s Library Champion Program offers an opportunity for local organizations and businesses to support our Foundation’s mission to maximize community resources and relationships that empower our Library to provide innovative programs and services that meet community needs.

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Events

Summer Dare Kick-Off Party!
Ladd Library
June 4, 1-4 pm

Out Loud! Authors Series
The Hotel at Kirkwood Center
June 9 @ 7 pm, Anne Perry
June 16 @ 7 pm, Kwame Alexander
June 23 @ 7 pm, Debbie Macomber

Summer Dare Celebration!
Greene Square
July 29, 10 am-noon

Summer Farmers Market Book Sales
Downtown Library Plaza
June 3 & 17
July 1 & 15
August 5 & 19
September 2

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