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

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.

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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
Letter from the Foundation

What was your favorite book when you were little? What did the cover look like? Were the pages tattered and worn? One of my favorite books was The Fire Cat by Esther Averill. I still read this book about Pickles to my children, and one of my favorite pages begins, “Pickles was a young cat. His paws were big. And he wished to do big things with them.” I often wonder what “big things” my children must imagine as I read these words to them.

When I return to work, I think about how many children don’t have books in their homes. Which means they aren’t being read to, so they might not be thinking about doing big things or life beyond what they see or know.

We know that children raised with books in their home achieve three more years of education than those raised without books. These children are our future workforce, business leaders, and elected officials. I am so proud to live in a community championing the need for books in children’s homes.

To be clear, we know that you make this possible. You are the key to this success.

Over the past year, the Foundation has increased our number of enrollment partners as well as resources supporting Library literacy programs. To date, we’ve mailed more than 80,000 Imagination Library books to over 6,000 Cedar Rapids children. More than 1,000 of these littles have turned five and are off to kindergarten. This summer, our community read more than 2.6 million minutes for our Summer Dare program, which is yet another record-setting number.

This newsletter celebrates our accomplishments from the past fiscal year and shares our plans for investments in 2020.

We cannot do this without you. You are helping our Library do big things, and for your investments, I am eternally grateful.

All my best,

Charity D. Tyler
Executive Director
Letter from Friends

Dear Friends,

There's more to fall than football.

There's the annual fall book sale on November 1, 2, and 3, sponsored by Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library. We are the #1 fans of the Cedar Rapids Public Library and your support of Friends allows us to provide important financial support to our public library. But that's not all we do.

As evidenced by the stories in this newsletter, your Friends group has been hard at work getting books into the hands of as many people as we can. Our commitment to literacy is second only to our library's commitment to literacy.

From helping stock the Free Little Libraries around town to putting personal copies of Bad Kitty into the hands of 2nd graders at the Nick Bruel author readings, we are accomplishing that goal. We've distributed free books at the ballpark, as part of the Kernels' summer reading program, and we've put library books into the hands of the home-bound by staffing the Books by Mail program. We are so proud to lend our volunteer support and our financial support to our public library.

Recipients of this newsletter are library supporters, too. That's you! And we invite you to consider the ways you show your support. Have you bought books at the Friends book sales? Have you donated gently used books to the Friends? Have you volunteered at a sale or in our sorting center? (Insider secret: when you work in the sorting center, you get first dibs on the new donations coming in.) These are all easy ways to show support for Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library.

Our big sale of the year will be here soon – November 1, 2 and 3 at the Cherry Building in the New Bo District. Make this your year to volunteer for the big sale. We'd love to have you!

With appreciation,

Libby Gotschall Slappey, President
Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library

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The Economic Impact and Return on Investment for Our Children

As you, our donors, continue to invest in Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library and the Library Foundation, we’re taking a larger look at the impact and return on these investments in our youngest citizens. Other Imagination Library affiliates are seeing increased kindergarten readiness, vocabulary, and reading comprehension scores for their Imagination Library-enrolled children. With your support, we believe we will see these same results, and hopefully even more socioeconomic impacts if the following research holds true.

Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman has written several pieces arguing that investment in a child’s early education (birth to three, age four to five) provides higher returns than those investments after entering school. Known as the Heckman equation, his research shows an average return on investment of 7-10% for high-quality early childhood programs with up to 13% return for investments in low-income neighborhoods. Societal and economic impacts of early childhood education investment also include increased economic mobility for two generations, increased workforce readiness, increased income, decreased health issues, and decreased interaction with the criminal justice system.

We are fortunate to have a community of investors (donors) who are supporting Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library. Investing $25 per child per year is putting books into children’s homes and building a reading environment beginning at birth. Children raised with books in their home achieve on average three more years of education than those raised without books. You are making a difference!

To make investing in our Cedar Rapids children easier, the Foundation recently launched its Imagination Library Sustaining Donor program. More information on this program supporting our Imagination Library can be found on the monthly giving tab of our website at www.CRLibrary.org/Foundation-Give. Our Library’s impact in our community.
Fiscal Year 2019 By the Numbers

Your annual gifts support Foundation-funded Library programs and services. The programs outlined below are just a few of the milestones you helped achieve this past fiscal year. Your investments are having an impact!

In 2019, the Foundation–funded Summer Dare program broke records across the board. Our community saw more adults than ever registering to participate and together people of all ages read more than 2.6 million minutes.

We enrolled 1,056 more children last fiscal year and mailed another 50,000 books to children in Cedar Rapids. At fiscal year-end, we were serving over 53% of Cedar Rapids’ children from birth to five, and we are marching toward our goal to register 80% (7,302 children) by December 31, 2021. Check out page 8 in this issue to see what 2020 will bring for this program!

Genealogy and research are two reasons people use the Digital Archives of the Cedar Rapids Public Library. Over the past two years, your Library Foundation has funded the digitization of The Gazette’s archives dating from 1883 to the present. More than 1.5 million images have been digitized to provide a better preserved and more searchable reporting of our history.

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**SUMMER DARE**

- 2,665,523 MINUTES READ
- 5,075 PARTICIPANTS
- 4,204 DARES COMPLETED
- 17,852 PROGRAM ATTENDEES

**DOLLY PARTON’S IMAGINATION LIBRARY**

- 4,883 CHILDREN ENROLLED
- 64,675 BOOKS MAILED
- 808 GRADUATES OFF TO KINDERGARTEN

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**PRESERVATION & ACCESS**

- The Gazette Digital Archives
  - 5,942 USERS
  - 13,356 SESSIONS
  - 211,268 PAGE VIEWS
Focus on Friends

Tales from the Sales

CHAPTER ONE

A very precocious little boy about six or seven was gazing wide-eyed at a table display of Better Books—chosen for this section of individually priced books because of their high quality and like-new condition. Most of them were adult books, although there were a couple of lovely over-sized picture books for young children. This little boy was not looking at those. His attention was captured by a book whose cover featured a close-up photograph of the moon in the night sky with the word MOON written across it in bold script.

One of the volunteers approached and asked the boy if she could help him find something. Pointing at the MOON book, the young man asked in a very serious tone “Is this a chapter book?”

“Yes, it is,” said the volunteer. “But I think it’s a chapter book for grown-ups.”

The boy’s shoulders drooped. Looking toward his nearby parents, the volunteer added, “There are children’s chapter books in the back of the room. Shall I show you?”

The little boy and his parents nodded. The volunteer led them to the children’s section and left them to browse. A while later, the boy and his parents returned to the check-out table with a stack of books, including several more appropriate chapter books. On the way out, the boy gave one more fleeting glance to the MOON book. Maybe he’ll find it again in a decade or so.

CHAPTER TWO

The day of a recent First Saturday Sale happened to coincide with the first Iowa football game of the season, so business was a bit little slow in the afternoon, leaving volunteers some time to get acquainted or reacquainted. One of the great things about getting involved with Friends is that you get involved with friends—old and new.

So as three volunteers — two old acquaintances and one new one—passed the time during a lull (mostly talking about books, of course), one mentioned that she had recently visited Glad Port, IA, at her husband’s insistence because he wanted to visit the Matchstick Marvels Museum.

“The WHAT?” was the immediate response of the others. She explained that there was a man there who built models from matchsticks and that he was quite famous; in fact, she informed them, his works were so remarkable that every Ripley’s Believe it or Not museum around the country features his work. Then she showed her companions the Website. They were gobsmacked!

As the Website (https://www.matchstickmarvels.com/) for the museum says, “Iowa artist Patrick Acton has glued over 7 million ordinary wooden matchsticks into 70 incredibly detailed scale models of life-like sculptures, complex machines, and world renown architecture.” You never know what you’ll learn at a Friends’ Book Sale, but it will always be interesting!

CHAPTER THREE

Near the end of the sale, a young man approached the check-out table with his arms loaded with the thickest, largest, heaviest books you can imagine. It was an amazing feat that he managed to tote all these books in one load from the back of the sales room to the front table without dropping any or seeming to feel the strain—though he did let out a big breath of relief when he finally edged them all safely onto the table. As the volunteers checked him out, he told them how happy he was with his finds—many of which dealt with mechanics and home repair—and at his ability to buy so many great resources for such a small price. Happy customers—that’s what makes our days at a book sale worthwhile.

Shortly thereafter, another young man approached the table. In his hand, he held just one old paperback, but he held it carefully, reverently. As he passed over his one-dollar payment, he explained that the book was a rare paperback version of J.D. Salinger’s classic Catcher in the Rye. What was unusual about it was the cover art.

He told us that Salinger HATED the cover of this vintage paperback because it featured a drawing of his main character Holden Caulfield. Salinger strongly believed that readers should be allowed to let their imagination create their own image of what Holden looked like. The author had not been consulted when the publisher changed the cover design for paperback editions. After Salinger’s objections and insistence on drawing up a new contract that addressed this issue, the design was dropped from subsequent paperback additions, and for many years, only the title appeared on the cover. Now, the cover art for paperback editions has reverted to the original hardback’s iconic image—created by Salinger’s friend E. Michael Mitchell—of a carousel horse. The eye-catching drawing was probably inspired by a scene in the next to last chapter when Holden’s sister takes a turn on a merry-go-round.

It’s probably a good bet that that book was worth more than the dollar our buyer paid for it—especially to him!

Conclusion: our customers are eclectic readers and savvy buyers. Any friend of Friends will tell you that they learn something new at every sale—from readers young and old. It’s a rare sale, too, when volunteers go home with only the one free book that is their reward for working; most of us leave laden down with great finds as well as great stories.

Join us at our next sale, and you, too, can get acquainted with wonderful people, witness and/or hear some amazing stories, and bring home as many books as you can carry!
Books Aren’t Just for Reading Anymore

Google “books as décor” and you will most likely be directed to either a Pinterest or Etsy site displaying a plethora of photographs showing the decorative versatility of books. You will find stacks of monochromatic books as accents, bundles of books stacked to form a table, wall shelves lined with books sorted by color, beautiful leather bound books filling the shelves of a home library, books repurposed for a new life as a snowmen, and even hollowed-out books used as a dispensers for tissues.

So it seems even a book that may no longer be a best seller or even a classic that will be read over and over can find a new life as décor.

If this sounds like an interesting new idea, Friends of the CRPL would like to help you find the perfect books to create a new look for your home. At our Annual Fall Book Sale, November 1, 2, and 3, a special section of the sale at the Cherry Building will be devoted to Décor and will feature not only decorative books, but we are joining forces with the Ceramics Center to showcase local artisans, so their extraordinary art will enhance our displays as well. Additional artists will also be included.

Enjoy some of the ideas featured here. We hope that they will sparks your creativity.

You Can’t Judge A Book by its Cover, What to Donate

The familiar old adage that you can’t judge a book by its cover applies to many situations. In this case, the adage might not be completely correct. If you have an overabundance of books and have decided to share with Friends of the CRPL, we are very grateful. One of the primary sources for our fundraising efforts comes from our book sales of donated books. But remember to ask yourself: Would I buy this book?

Throughout the year, Friends works diligently to offer good values in used books. Please help us by following these suggestions.

**We are looking for the following items**, in good condition that are not water damaged, do not have any traces of mold or mildew, and have covers and pages intact.

- Hardback and paperback books
- Children’s books
- Audiobooks, CDs, DVDs
- Puzzles (all pieces included)

**We would decline the following items:**
- Encyclopedias
- Magazines or newspapers
- Media not indicated above
- Catalogs

If you aren't sure about your donation, please send us an email at crfriends@gmail.com
Focus on Foundation

How Your Gifts Support Our Library

Literacy * Access * Inclusion

Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (DPIL) – Our Imagination Library provides Cedar Rapids children one free, age-appropriate book per month from birth to their 5th birthday, regardless of income. These high-quality books are mailed to the child’s home with the child’s name on it. Children enrolled at birth will have 60 personalized books in their home before they reach kindergarten, promoting early Literacy and kindergarten readiness.

Preschool Outreach – Library staff use the Every Child Ready to Read curriculum during story times inside and outside our Library. Through monthly story times at preschools serving low-income children, Library staff engage children in the five early literacy practices of Sing, Talk, Read, Write, and Play. These pre and early literacy skills are essential for future success. Since 1990, this program has provided story time books for the children to take home in addition to snacks for special events such as parent-teacher meetings and graduation ceremonies. The preschool outreach program supports early Literacy and provides Access to library services for families who might struggle to make it through our doors.

Summer Dare Program – Our Library’s Summer Dare is an intergenerational program that combines reading with activities that encourage lifelong learning. Four years ago, Summer Dare Everywhere began partnering with area nonprofits serving children who are unable to visit the Library during the summer. These collaborations support Literacy, Access, and Inclusion for all during the summer months when children struggling in school are most vulnerable. Through data sharing agreements with Cedar Rapids Community Schools, our Library will study the program’s effect on preventing summer slide.

Video Streaming and More – Hoopla is a digital media service that features movies, music, audiobooks, eBooks, comics, and TV shows. Hoopla’s vast catalog allows expanded diversity in resources to support the Library’s efforts in providing Inclusion and representation in our collection. Patrons can access content through phones, tablets, or smart TVs, allowing Access to Library materials anywhere. Hoopla offers a wide variety of materials without the need for holds lists.

Book Club Facilitators – Our Library maintains more than 100 book club kits that are available to the public and used by the Library’s off-site book clubs. The Library Foundation provides funding for two book club facilitators who, since 2004, have led monthly discussions at Cottage Grove Place and Meth-Wick Community to promote Literacy and lifelong learning. Working with our community partners, the program offers Access to library service to seniors who may struggle to get to the library on their own.
Recognizing Our Purpose-Driven Funds

The Foundation supports our Library’s programs and services through four purpose-driven funds, allowing our Library to provide innovative, award-winning programs and services that move the community forward. Each of these funds captures the fundamental role of a free, public library and embraces our Library’s strategic priorities of Literacy, Access, and Inclusion.

**The Books & Materials Fund.** Promoting all forms of literacy from digital to financial, our Library’s collections provide access to information in many ways. The Books & Materials Fund supports our Library’s books (physical, audio, and e-books) as well as our Virtual Library via online and digital content found on our website or app. Gifts to this fund have created the non-profit resources collection, book clubs kits, and crafting collections. One of our most-used Foundation-funded resources is our Library’s online digital archives, which includes digital copies of The Gazette from the mid-1800’s to present.

**The Children’s Fund.** Opening eyes and minds to new worlds and sparking imagination, the Children’s Fund supports children’s programs, providing story times, picture books, and so much more to promote literacy in our youngest citizens. From a 29 year partnership with Cargill Cares’ preschool outreach to our new Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, the Children’s Fund inspires children and adults every day.

**The Program Fund.** Our Library provides programs and service for all community members. This means that our Library plans and facilitates programs from bookish arts and crafts or basic computer skills classes to the Out Loud Author Series and its intergenerational Summer Dare reading program. The Program Fund supports our Library’s efforts to provide robust and broad-ranging programs for everyone we serve.

**The Unrestricted Fund.** Often quoted as supporting our areas of greatest need, the Unrestricted Fund allows the most flexibility within donor gifts. Library and Library Foundation have utilized gift to this fund to provide book club facilitators at senior living centers, to recognize our Library volunteers and staff, and to install Library computers at Willis Dady Homeless Shelter. If a Library support request doesn’t fall into one of the other three purpose-driven funds, the Unrestricted Fund is where we must turn to support our Library’s efforts to meet community needs.

As we’ve continued to share, your investments are important and are helping our Library and Foundation do big things together now and into the future. These four purpose-driven funds allow you to support our Library and the Library Foundation by investing in what you love.
FROM YOUR SHELVES TO OURS

The Fascinating Journey of One Donated Book

For every book lover, there comes a time when, for one reason or another, we have to say goodbye to treasures from our past — to dusty novels, enjoyed once but no longer treasured; to beloved, but now slightly tattered tomes of past generations; to favorite books of children now grown; to all those slightly worn paperbacks. Sometimes you just have to let go. But what can you do with these rich, wonderful resources? You can't just throw them away!

Of course you can't. What you CAN do is donate them to Friends of the CRPL, so someone else can discover and enjoy them. Every day, people just like you donate books to Friends and go on about their day feeling good that they have a) decluttered their world a bit, b) made a contribution that will ultimately help the Library, and c) recycled a great read that may enhance someone else's life.

*To learn more about how and what to donate, see the accompanying article in this issue of the Newsletter that offers complete details on HOW TO DONATE BOOKS.

That's all great, but have you ever given a second thought to how those books get from the return slot to a Friends of the Library sale? It's a labor-intensive journey that requires many key players, without whom none of this would be possible.

STEP ONE

Your book begins its journey in one of two ways. If you have dropped a few books in the return slot outside either library or into an interior drop slot, they will travel on a conveyor belt to the sorting room and drop into the Friends’ container. (If you’ve never noticed it, at the main branch there’s a window on the sorting room door where you can look in and see books traveling along the conveyor belt. It's located near the back-entrance doors; there's an interior return drop there as well.)

If you have boxes of books to donate, a library staff member can meet you in the parking lot and load your donations on a cart that will be transferred to the Friends’ sorting room at the downtown library.

STEP TWO

Friends’ volunteers collect the donated books daily and separate them according to categories and genres: fiction (including romance, mystery, science fiction, literary fiction), non-fiction (including biography, self-help, cookbooks, history, psychology and on and on from anthropology to zoology), reference, children’s, vintage, rare, etc. Each of these goes into a separate box. Very rare or other potentially valuable books are separated for possible placement for sale online. Friends volunteers research these on the Internet to determine appropriate prices for them.
**Focus on Friends**

**STEP THREE**

The books are now ready to be shelved according to their designated category. This process involves a team of volunteers, each of whom is in charge of a certain set of shelves. Bob may be responsible for the home repair shelves; Shelia the mysteries, and Diane the books on botany and horticulture, and so on.

As these volunteers organize and replenish their shelves each week, they also take note of possible candidates for the “Giftable” or “Better Book” designation. These are books featured at sales and priced individually.

**STEP FOUR: Book Sales**

Our goal is to get every donated book into the hands of new readers. We accomplish this through several sales, and we have a variety of those. See the list below.

Each of these requires more volunteer support. Our on-site sales require many hands to arrange for advertising, fill bookshelves and/or carts, set up displays and signage, work during sale hours, and then clean up after. Online sales require volunteers to research, monitor sales, and prepare purchases to be mailed to buyers. Sales are held at the following venues:

**AT BOTH LIBRARY LOCATIONS:** Book Nooks are open during library hours at the downtown library and at Ladd and offer a wide variety of hardbacks for children and adults for just $2 each.

**AT THE DOWNTOWN LIBRARY:** Friends of the Library offers a book sale in front of the downtown Library on Downtown Farmer’s Markets Days.

**AT THE CHERRY BUILDING-BASEMENT BOOKS:** The Friends group also stages three larger sales during the year. For more information go to https://www.crlibrary.org/about-us/support/friends-of-the-library/.

**ONLINE:** Rare and valuable are listed online.

**STEP FIVE: Final Destination – YOUR HOUSE!**

Enjoy your “new” books and maybe take a moment to remember all the faithful volunteers that helped get that book from our shelves to yours! Also remember that every penny of profit goes to support the Library’s literacy outreach programs. We thank you for your generous donations and support!
Foundation

Save the Dates*

Literary Vines: A Beer & Wine Tasting
To benefit the Library Foundation
Saturday, May 2; 6 to 8 pm
Downtown Library

Van Vechten Society Brunch
Saturday, June 6; 10 am to Noon
Downtown Library

* Invitations will be mailed closer to the date.

Friends Books Sales

Fall Book Sale – Cherry Building
Friday, November 1; Noon to 7 pm
Saturday, November 2; 9 am to 5 pm
Sunday, November 3; Noon to 4 pm*
*Sunday Box Sale: $8 small, $16 large

Very Cherry Holiday –
Cherry Building
Saturday, December 7; 9 am to 3 pm

Winter/Spring First Saturday Sales
Cherry Building, Basement Books
9 am to 3 pm
January 4
February 1
March 7
April 4
May 2

Please visit www.crlibrary.org to see details and a complete list of programs.