

Adult Classes and Events

A Talk with Author Nate Schweber

New York Times journalist and author of *This America of Ours: Bernard and Avis Devoto and the Forgotten Fight to Save the Wild* joined us for a virtual presentation on his award-winning book. Attendees were treated to Nate's dynamic storytelling and a Q&A session. After the presentation, attendees stayed to chat with one another about the various topics of talk. Friends' funds provided an honorarium to Nate Schweber.

Books and Brews

Books and Brews offers APL patrons a welcoming space to discuss their latest reads. Each month, participants recommend a great balance of fiction and non-fiction books, which we now share with the public via social media. In the 1st quarter, Books & Brews met at Copper Rock Coffee Company and at the new Appleton Public Library. Friends' funds provide coffee and tea.

Blind Contour Drawing with Ally Wilber

Local artist and Artist-in-Residence curator Ally Wilber join the APL Grand Opening festivities, guiding patrons through a blind contour drawing. This program provided patrons with a unique opportunity to engage with visual art. Each contour drawing was followed by many laughs and smiles! Friends' funds provided a presenter honorarium.

Cooking Demo with Natasha Banks

Local chef and entrepreneur Natasha Banks presented an engaging program that introduced attendees to the history of Southern cuisine, a demonstration of steps to make collard greens, and tips for best presentation of the dish. Attendees ranged from teens to adults and shared their interest in this program and additional cooking demonstrations. Friends' funds provided a presenter honorarium.

Find Your Ancestors: Creating an Ancestor Sketch

The 2025 Find Your Ancestors series began our year with the return of renowned genealogist and speaker Thomas MacEntee to present "Creating an Ancestor Sketch." Thomas broke down the essential elements of writing compelling stories about your ancestors, sharing useful tips on how to enrich your narrative, and demonstrated how to effortlessly import facts from your family tree, making the process even smoother. To add additional details and make the writing of the sketch easier for even non-writers, Thomas introduced how to use the powers of artificial intelligence to obtain social history content or re-write your text in a unique style. Attendees left feeling inspired and empowered, with many saying that the brief introduction to AI made documenting their family stories feel less intimidating and more achievable than they thought. Friends provided financial support for this series and an honorarium for this speaker.

Find Your Ancestors: Deciphering Penmanship and Why Spelling Matters

Find Your Ancestors series kicked off its first hybrid event in our newly renovated library, featuring Jill Swenson, a retired journalism professor and author. Jill delivered a fascinating presentation on the history of penmanship and its challenges in deciphering

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primary source documents commonly encountered in genealogy research. She also shared valuable strategies for interpreting handwriting and handling spelling variations. Attendees enjoyed the historical context and appreciated how Jill integrated examples from her own research to highlight the importance of accurate spelling and how handwritten records gave valuable information to reach her conclusion. Friends provided financial support for this series and an honorarium for this speaker.

Find Your Ancestors: Using AI to Translate and Manipulate Foreign Language Documents

The Find Your Ancestors series welcomed genealogist Natalie Webb for an insightful presentation on how artificial intelligence is revolutionizing genealogy research, particularly in translating foreign-language documents. Natalie guided attendees through live demonstrations of popular AI tools, highlighting cutting-edge technologies that simplify the interpretation of global texts with just a few keystrokes. Following the demonstrations, a lively discussion explored various applications of AI in genealogy and beyond. Attendees appreciated the hands-on demonstrations, with many expressing confidences that, despite limited computer skills, they could easily incorporate AI into their research. Friends provided financial support for this series and an honorarium for this speaker.

Fox Valley Flute Choir Performance

The Fox Valley Flute Choir is a group of flutists who perform on piccolo, C flutes, alto, and bass. They presented a dynamic performance of traditional classical music as well as contemporary pieces in the Mary Beth Nienhaus Community Meeting Rooms during the library's grand opening. Friends' funds provided a presenter honorarium.

Live Music with FlipSide Artist Karli Reisdorf

Karli Reisdorf is a solo artist and part of the band Natural Satellite, which is featured in APL's FlipSide music collection. Karli performed a live cello set on the Boldt Learning Stairs during the library's grand opening. This live music performance showcased the unique new space and filled the library with delightful music. Friends' funds provided a presenter honorarium.

Live Painting with Artist Alexsis Manns

Artist Alexsis Manns created a painting in the Vira Stoner Flex Box during the library's grand opening. This live art demonstration showcased the unique new space and allowed attendees to meet an artist, watch their craft, and ask questions in an informal setting. Friends' funds provided a presenter honorarium.

Make Your Own Bubble Tea with Fanni Xie

Local business owner Fanni Xie presented a fun and interactive session that introduced attendees to various types of teas, a discussion of bubble tea varieties and preparation methods, and a hands-on experience to customize their own bubble tea. Participants enjoyed learning and tasting the teas. Friends' funds provided a presenter honorarium.

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Sages Story Circle

Sages Story Circles are community spaces designed to connect, affirm, and empower women aged 60+. The sessions are offered twice per month in the library. They provide a safe space to share stories of their lives, provide a creative outlet, and foster a deep sense of community among participants. Friends' funds provide a presenter honorarium.

Teen Classes and Events

Game ON! Teen Gaming

Teens in grades 6-12 are invited to participate in a dynamic gaming session in the Vira Stoner Flex Box in our weekly Game ON! Program. Two dedicated volunteer program facilitators create an inviting program for young gamers to play Playstation 5, Nintendo Switch, and a variety of tabletop games. Attendance has increased steadily since the program launched in February. Friends' funds were used to purchase the gaming equipment, games, and refreshments for this program.

Teens Create

Teens Create is a monthly program for teens in grades 6-12 to gather, learn, and be creative! This quarter included sessions on Postcrossing connections, creative writing, and Suminagashi Japanese paper marbling. Friends' funds were used to purchase program supplies and to provide refreshments for this program.

Teen Ambassador Program (TAP)

Teens gather monthly in the Vira Stoner Flex Box for an exchange of program ideas, news updates and more. Teen Ambassador Program (TAP) has seen the addition of three new members since February. The input provided by our members helps in the design of the annual Teen Summer Library Program, including programming themes and prizes. Friends' funds provide refreshments for this program.

Teens Thrive

Teens Thrive is a monthly wellness series led by Reach Counseling to help build positive self-development in young adults. Topics such as healthy relationships and digital safety are explored along with a fun and engaging activity for grades 7-12. Teens have been able to share their experiences in a supportive environment, building communication and trust. Friends' funds provide refreshments for this program.

Teens Transform

Teens Transform, led by Lawrence University Environmental Studies major Jonathan Xique, covers topics in sustainability including waste, water and energy. Each session includes an interactive activity that brings the concepts covered to life in a way that fuels awareness, empowers, and encourages teens to share lived experiences as a group. Friends' funds were used for the presenter honorarium, supplies, and refreshments for this program.

Children's Classes and Events

Memorial Park StoryWalk

Children's Services utilized Friends' funds to purchase two copies of the following books:

The Storm Whale in Winter by Benji Davies
Guess How Much I Love you by Sam McBratney
Explorers of the Wild by Cale Atkinson

These books were unassembled and then reassembled as StoryWalk pages. Appleton Parks & Rec built and installed permanent sign holders along a trail at Memorial Park for the StoryWalk pages to be displayed. Families who walk the trail can read the story as they go. These titles are up for one month each. In addition to the story itself, each page has fun activities to engage families as they read and walk. Friends' funds provided the books for the Storywalks.

Crafty Creators

Children's Services utilized Friends' funds to purchase supplies for Crafty Creators. In February and March, the Tuesday night program was well attended. Kids in grades K-6 tried crafts and activities related to winter, paint, the ocean, animals, St. Patrick's Day, and marine animals.

March Book Madness

In March we held our annual March Book Madness reading program. 937 children signed up. After filling out a bracket and reading 16 books, kids were able to decide which book was their favorite of the month. Upon completing the program, kids picked out a ball prize and were entered into a grand prize drawing for a basketball, giant inflatable balls, or tickets to a Bucks basketball game. Friends' funds were used to purchase the completion and grand prizes.

Program Supplies

Friends' funds were used to purchase supplies for programming including bubble wands, toy cash registers, and sensory bin fillers. These items are used weekly in programs and well loved by the children.

Snacks for Multicultural Book Clubs

Friends' funds are used to purchase snacks for the bi-monthly Multicultural Book Club meetings at the library. Multilingual families come to explore intentional linguistics activities as well as learn how to help their children succeed at school. We do activities like STEM, social emotional learning, math, reading, and other activities that encourage children to practice their abilities and improve their reading levels. Providing snacks ensures children are ready to participate when they come directly from school for the program.

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School-Age STEAM

February - March Monday afternoons and evening School-Age STEAM programs were well attended and a ton of fun! As always, each week had its own theme to explore. Kids in grades K-6 tried activities and experiments related to Dog Man, temperature, Charlie Harper art, the human body, paper, weather, and plants. Thank you to Friends for purchasing the supplies and technology to make this on-going program possible.

STREAM Team

Friends' funds were used to purchase supplies for STREAM Team. In February and March children ages 3-5 years old participated in hands-on activity stations related to the themes of snow, space, cookies, St. Patrick's Day, and spring.

Family Classes and Events

Grand Opening Symphony Storytime

On Feb 15, Miss Karen was joined by Sarah Koenig, violinist, and member of the Fox Valley Symphony Orchestra (FVSO) for an all-ages family friendly Grand Opening Storytime event at the Appleton Public Library. Miss Karen read *Roar-chestra; A Wild Story of Musical Words by Robert Heidbreder*. The children danced along through the story and enjoyed playing music with shaker eggs, scarves, and rhythm sticks. Friends' Funds were used for Performer stipends.

Grand Opening Instrument Petting Zoo with Aurora Institute for the Arts

Miss Karen was joined by Anna Herrera, as we celebrated the Grand Opening of the new library. Miss Karen read *May There Always Be Sunshine* by Jim Gill and *Sing a Song* by Joe Rapposo. Children had an opportunity to explore the violin and cello, along with learning rhythm and beat using rhythm sticks. Friends' Funds were used for Performer stipends.

Outreach at Marcus Valley Grand

We had a fun outreach table at Marcus Valley Grand Theater for the opening night of the Dog Man movie on Jan 31. People came to our table to sign up for a library card or learn about the new library. They could also take a Dog Man sticker and enter to win a Dog Man plush toy. It was very exciting! Thank you to Friends for funding the prizes.

Programs for All Ages

Ongoing Classes, Events and Services

Special Projects

Constant Contact

Friends' funds pay for our mass email service provider. We use this service to email our subscribers information about library news, classes, services and more.

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Digital Creation Studio Equipment

Friends' funds were used to purchase technology and equipment for the Digital Creation Studios in the renovated library. This equipment will facilitate dynamic experimentation and creation in the studio spaces.

Display - Appleton Public Library: A Look Back and A Look Ahead

APL's Local History Librarian created a display to showcase the library's history from 1887 to the grand opening of the renovated library. The display was used to promote two upcoming programs that detailed the history with notable milestones and historic photos. Friends' funds supported the display printing and easels.

Display Cases & Mobile Towers

Friends' funds were used to purchase display cases and mobile grid towers that will showcase art from our Artist in Residence program in the Rick & Sue Detienne Gallery and have flexibility to feature displays in other spaces across the library.

Library Supplies and Equipment

Friends' funds were used to purchase supplies for opening the library including Print Release Stations for all three floors, acrylic sign holders, program counters, an air compressor, slide advancers, magnetic baskets for end caps, and so much more. These necessary items form the backdrop for both everyday tasks and innovative programs and experiences.

Loomly

Friends' funds pay for our social media content scheduler. We use this service to proof and strategically schedule content for all our social media outlets.

Grand Opening Communications and Printing

Friends' funds paid for several communications pieces for the grand opening of the library – including staff t-shirts, grand opening invitations, grand opening ceremony programs, stickers, and library maps.

Monthlies Project

The Monthlies Project is a community initiative providing menstrual products to community members in schools and public spaces and bringing awareness to the issue of period poverty. APL has partnered with the project since 2023 and continues to host menstrual products in all public restrooms in the library. Friends' funds supported the purchase of baskets to hold the products.

Oversized Library Cards

Library staff bring oversized library cards to special events for fun and memorable photo opportunities with community members. New oversized library cards feature APL's updated card design and were used for a photo booth in the Thomas P. Fanning Teen Area at the library's grand opening event. Friends' funds supported the card printing.

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Thomas P. Fanning Teen Area

A giant coloring poster and tabletop games were added to the long table in the Thomas P. Fanning Teen Area as a fun way to attract and engage teens in the space. Coloring posters are rotated monthly and have proven to be extremely popular. A group of young adults said this area is their favorite section in the library describing the coloring area as “calming and relaxing.” Friends' funds were used to purchase coloring posters.