

Adult Classes and Events

Books and Brews

Books and Brews offers APL patrons a welcoming space to gather with fellow readers to discuss their latest reads. Each month, participants recommend a great balance of fiction and nonfiction books. Friends' funds provide coffee and tea.

Find Your Ancestors: 150+ Tips & Sources for Locating Ancestral Photos Online & Offline

In April, the Find Your Ancestors series hosted professional genealogist Katherine R. Willson, who delivered an engaging presentation featuring a wide variety of more than 150 tips and sources that can assist genealogists with discovering family photographs. Katherine shared advanced search techniques for several popular genealogy websites and introduced attendees to a variety of lesser-known and often overlooked sources — including published family histories, historical newspapers, genealogical societies, and more. Participants praised her deep expertise, the clarity and richness of the information presented, and the exceptional handout that included direct links to every resource mentioned. Her dynamic session left attendees inspired and eager to explore the tools in their own quest for family photos. Friends provided financial support for this series and an honorarium for this speaker.

Find Your Ancestors: A Symbolic Death: Gravestone Symbolism

In June, the Find Your Ancestors series welcomed back genealogist Angie Knutson for a fascinating presentation on gravestone symbolism. Angie began by providing historical context on cemetery traditions and burial customs before guiding attendees through many of the common symbols found on headstones — revealing the meanings behind many common symbols such as weeping willows, clasped hands, and various kinds of flowers. She also highlighted several striking and unusual gravestones from local cemeteries and around the world. The session concluded with helpful tips on cemetery etiquette, gravestone care, and best practices for photographing hard-to-read markers. Friends provided financial support for this series.

Find Your Ancestors: Uncovering Hidden Roots with DNA

The focus of the May Find Your Ancestors program was Uncovering Hidden Roots With DNA, presented by Dana Kelly, Executive Director of the Norwegian American Genealogical Center & Naeseth Library. Dana guided attendees through two compelling case studies, demonstrating how DNA testing can not only validate traditional genealogical research but also uncover previously unknown ancestors through strategic analysis of DNA matches. Dana also provided attendees with a strategy to help them deal with the overwhelming amount of DNA matches they may have, walking them through how to identify known matches, sort the shared matches you have in common with that person, and assign those matches a color to group them by branch of the family tree. Participants especially appreciated Dana's ability to simplify a complex topic, as well as her introduction to powerful research tools that were new to many in the audience. Friends provided financial support for this series and an honorarium for this speaker.

FRIENDS GRANT PROGRAM SUMMARIES

2nd QUARTER 2025

FlipSide “Concerts & Stories”

“Concerts & Stories” is a new concert series, hosting FlipSide artists for a special concert experience. These 90-minute programs include performances from our artists, a read-aloud, and a Q&A. This unique format allows for connections between artist and listener not typically found on a concert stage. Friends’ funds provided an honorarium to our first two performers, Erin Krebs and 7000apart.

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

Every week, a team of dedicated volunteers creates a dynamic program experience for young gamers to enjoy PlayStation 5, Nintendo Switch, a variety of tabletop games, and now computer games. The program has experienced a steady increase in participants and has expanded to two days per week. Friends’ funds were used to purchase 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 Junk Journals with Artist Leah Quinn, Perler Palooza (Perler bead creations), and Stained-Glass Foil Art. Friends’ funds were used to purchase program supplies and to provide refreshments for this program.

- **Canvas Creations**

Teens were given blank canvases, acrylic paints, and got to work creating amazing art! Several options were available for teens to incorporate into their designs (stencils, washi tape, art prompts). However, most teens had an idea in mind and each displayed incredible talent. Friends’ funds were used to purchase the supplies for this program.

- **Junk Journals with Artist Leah Quinn**

On Earth Day, teens created using “junk” (old magazines, newspapers, etc.) to make expressive personal journals in a collage style. Artist Leah Quinn guided the teens through this process focusing on gratitude and self-expression. Friends’ funds provided an honorarium to Leah Quinn.

FRIENDS GRANT PROGRAM SUMMARIES

2nd QUARTER 2025

- **Perler Palooza**

This drop-in program allowed teens to create a Perler bead design using provided templates or their own unique creations. Friends' funds purchased the supplies for this program years ago, and it continues to be a gift that keeps on giving. Teens thoroughly enjoy this activity whether they are with friends or solo.

- **Stained Glass Foil Art**

Teens created beautiful art resembling stained glass using aluminum foil and Sharpie markers. Friends' funds purchased the supplies for this program which will also be used for several upcoming classes & events.

Teen Ambassador Program (TAP)

Teens meet monthly in the Vira Stoner Flex Box for an exchange of program ideas, library updates and more. The Teen Ambassador Program (TAP) has experienced growth in new participants and engagement. The input provided by our members helped in the design of the annual Teen Summer Library Program, including programming themes and prizes. Friends' funds provide refreshments for this program.

Teen Summer Library Program - Glow up! Natural Beauty and Self-Care

Kicking off TSLP, teens created portable samples of dry shampoo, body scrub, and face masks using all-natural ingredients. One participant shared that he was making these items for his upcoming camping trip. This program is the most well attended program during TSLP and was repeated after a request from teens last summer. Friends' funds were used for the program supplies.

Teen Summer Library Program - Tie Dye Frenzy

Teens got creative and made brilliant tie-dye patterns on shirts and tank tops. Participants learned about color theory, worked individually and in teams to twist, fold and crumple fabric with rubber bands while applying a variety of color dyes. This activity was meant to celebrate individuality, free thinking, and creativity, which lends to its broad appeal and popularity. Friends funding was used for the program supplies.

Teens Thrive

Teens Thrive is a monthly wellness series led by Reach Counseling to help build positive self-development in young adults in grades 7-12. Topics such as healthy relationships and digital safety were explored along with fun and engaging activities. Teens shared 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 included an interactive activity that fueled awareness and empowered teens to share lived experiences and practical solutions. Friends' funds were used for the presenter honorarium, supplies, and refreshments for this program.

FRIENDS GRANT PROGRAM SUMMARIES

2nd QUARTER 2025

Slice of Knowledge Pizza & Study Session

This program was offered for high school students during AP testing. Teens had the opportunity to enjoy pizza and beverages while having a quiet place to study for exams. Information about library databases to help students with school & testing were also provided. Friends' funds were used to purchase food and refreshments for this event.

Teen Movie: The Mitchells vs. The Machines

A special movie night for teens in grades 6-12 was held during the last week of school before summer break. This popular Netflix film was a hit with those in attendance who also enjoyed snacking on popcorn. Friends' funds support the library's film screening license and were used to purchase popcorn for this event.

Children's Classes and Events

Memorial Park StoryWalk

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

How to Say Hello to a Worm by Kari Percival

Don't Touch That Flower! by Alice Hemming

Mud! by Annie Bailey

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 books for the Storywalks.

Craft Around the World

Friends Funds were used to support the Craft Around the World program which celebrates global cultures through stories and hands-on crafts. In June, patrons explored the rich traditions of Malaysia, Pakistan, and Vietnam. Each session offered a unique opportunity to learn about these countries' heritage while engaging in creative, culturally inspired crafts.

Program Supplies

Friends' funds were used to purchase supplies for programming; including construction paper, storage bins, flannel and sensory bin fillers. These items are used weekly to assist staff in programs.

FRIENDS GRANT PROGRAM SUMMARIES

2nd QUARTER 2025

Musical Moving Storytime

Friends' funds were used to purchase materials for a series of musical storytimes. Children learned how to sing and play with instruments and created their own musical instruments to bring home and celebrate singing the rhythm of their names.

Family Classes and Events

Butterfly Festival

Appleton Public Library's children's staff were invited back to the 15th Annual Fox Cities Butterfly Festival. The library provided the opportunity for program attendees to make watercolor butterflies. Friends' funds were used to purchase supplies for the craft.

Celebrating 50 Years of Hmong in America

Celebrating 50 years of Hmong in America is a momentous occasion that pays tribute to the rich history, culture, and contributions of the Hmong community. The Appleton Public Library marked this significant milestone by hosting a program that celebrated Hmong heritage through oral storytelling and crafts. Friends' funds were used to purchase supplies for crafting activities.

Mischief and Magic

Library patrons joined Mischief and Magic for a mesmerizing magic show. Performances at 10am had 214 in attendance and at 1:30pm had 139 patrons in attendance. Friends' Funds were used for performer stipends.

Drive-In Movie

APL families enjoyed their first movie program in the new building. Little ones designed "cars" out of our moving boxes and supplies purchased by Friends. They then sat in their vehicles and watched *The Wild Robot* as a mini drive-in movie experience. Friends' Funds also pay for the rights to publicly screen movies.

Programs for All Ages

Ongoing Classes, Events and Services

Artist-in-Residence: Colt Brown

APL has relaunched its Artist-in-Residence program, providing a space for artists to showcase their work and engage with our diverse population. Each residency lasts three consecutive months, during which our artist provides a gallery exhibition and three library programs. The Artist-in-Residence program aims to inspire and educate, foster a connected community, and expand our role as a community resource. Friends' funds provided an honorarium to the first 2025 Artist-in-Residence, Colt Brown, and program supplies.

FRIENDS GRANT PROGRAM SUMMARIES

2nd QUARTER 2025

School-Age STEAM

April - June Monday afternoon and evening School-Age STEAM programs were well attended with a significant increase in June. Hundreds of kids and parents have had a ton of fun while learning! As always, each week had its own theme to explore. Kids in grades K-6 tried activities and experiments related to flying toys, coding fun, glaciers with the American Chemistry Society, process art, bees, flowers, spy craft, and more. Thank you to Friends and the Trout Endowment for Reluctant Readers for purchasing the supplies and technology to make this on-going program possible! We also continue to use Friends previously purchased technology.

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.

Symphony Storytime

April 5 – Randy Manning, violinist in the Fox Valley Symphony Orchestra joined Miss Karen for a musical morning. We read and sang, *Sing* by Joe Raposo and *What This Story Needs is a Bang and a Clang* by Emma Virjan.

May 10 – Anna Herrera, cellist in the FVSO joined Miss Karen as we read, *I Know a Shy Fellow Who Swallowed a Cello* by Barbara Garriel and *I Like to Eat Apples and Bananas*.

June 4 – Barbara Beechey, violist in the FVSO joined Miss Karen as we read *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* by Jan Cabrera and *Pokko and the Drum* by Matthew Foresythe. The children danced along through the stories and enjoyed playing music with shaker eggs, scarves, and rhythm sticks. Friends' funds were used for Performer stipends.

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.

Dramatic Play in the Hetzel-Long Wonder Zone

Friends' funds raised during the 2021 Giving Tuesday fundraiser were used to purchase a play kitchen, light table, market stand, and supplies for 7 dramatic play themes (farmers market, bakery, breakfast diner, sandwich shop, taco stand, hardware store, and post office). The dramatic play theme is switched out monthly to provide new and exciting play opportunities that foster problem-solving, social, fine motor, language and creativity skills.

FRIENDS GRANT PROGRAM SUMMARIES

2nd QUARTER 2025

Early Childhood Floor Activities

Friends' funds were used to purchase a new light table and magnet activities geared toward 0–5-year-olds. Activities are switched out monthly.

School-Age Passive Floor Activities

Friends has generously funded new activities for our school-age crowd to explore while they are at the library. We now have magnet activities, games, puzzles, and mazes that are rotated out monthly. But the most exciting news for our K-6th grade patrons is that we now offer a permanent Lego wall and chess table.

Step Stools

Programming staff noticed it was hard for the library's youngest patrons to reach the soap and paper towels when trying to wash their hands. Friends' funds were used to purchase four step stools to correct this issue.

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.

Soundtrack Streaming Music Service

Friends' funds were used to purchase a yearly subscription to Soundtrack music streaming service to use for music in programs.

Thomas P. Fanning Teen Area

The teen space was refreshed with new and exciting card and board games plus mindful coloring supplies to attract more teens and appeal to a variety of interests. Solo, multiplayer, cultural and classic games as well as logic and STEM-inspired games were added to the collection. Games are rotated on a weekly basis and are also enjoyed during Game On! Friends' funding was used to purchase the new game sets.