

Adult Classes and Events

Books and Brews

Books and Brews book discussion continues to bring people together to discuss the different books they are reading in a simple book club that allows participants to read different genres and read at their own pace. A participant shared how much they love the book club because it creates a sense of ownership of their reading choices. Participants love being in a shared space with book enthusiasts to talk about books and enjoy different beverages. The participants also appreciate the monthly Books and Brews' book list that staff create from participant recommendations. Friends' funds provide coffee, tea, or non-alcoholic beverages.

Find Your Ancestors: 10 Must Haves for Genealogy and Family History Success

The Find Your Ancestors series kicked off the 2024 season hosting Thomas MacEntee, a well-known professional genealogist and lecturer, to present "10 Must Haves for Genealogy and Family History Success." Thomas discussed important skills, such as communication, writing and organizational skills, and gave suggestions on how to expand your skills in these areas in relation to genealogy research. One attendee said, "One of the best informative, professional, and well-presented webinars that I have viewed. Thank you for all the fabulous ideas and organizational information." This program broke a new highest attendance (415 attendees) and highest registration (713 registrants) record for our Find Your Ancestors series. Friends provided financial support for this series and an honorarium for this speaker.

Find Your Ancestors: Finding Relations When No Family Stories Exist

Our February Find Your Ancestors session welcomed back a fan-favorite: librarian and genealogist Debra Dudek who walked attendees through a case study from her own family that started with just a postcard and ended with her uncovering family relations. Debra's presentation showcased the importance of exhaustive research and researching outside of your direct line ancestors, while showing how to organize and analyze information in important resources like city directories, census records, and Fold3. Attendees enjoyed the tips Debra sprinkled throughout her presentation, such as how to locate a census record with a street address to find our ancestors whose names have been badly misspelled. One attendee said, "Debra's suggestions for ways to find ancestors and their family members were very helpful for 'newbies' as well as seasoned genealogical researchers!" Friends provided financial support for this series and an honorarium for this speaker.

Find Your Ancestors: Finding What You Need and Making the Most of What You Find

The Find Your Ancestors series hosted professional genealogist Pam Vestal in March to present "Finding What You Need and Making the Most of What You Find." Pam offered twenty practical strategies to help genealogists of all skill levels learn how to become a more effective and efficient researcher. Strategies included information such as how to search for "hidden" records, exploring your ancestor's FAN club (Friends/Family,

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Associates and Neighbors), and analyzing the credibility of sources used in your research. One attendee shared, "I've been researching my family tree for over 20 years. This webinar gave me new/better methods on how to search online and what documents I'm looking for - both via physical locations and online. It was terrific!" Friends provided financial support for this series and an honorarium for this speaker.

Teen Classes and Events

"Healthy Relationships, Healthy You" with REACH Counseling

Teen Services collaborated with Reach Counseling for the special program, "Healthy Relationships, Healthy You" during Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. This program was especially designed for teens in grades 7-12 and focused on establishing healthy boundaries in relationships and positive self-image in a fun and interactive way. The teen participants were engaged during the presentation, completed an activity and enjoyed treats. Friends' funds were used to purchase snacks for the program.

Sweet Reopening – Candy Jewelry

To help celebrate the 'sweet' reopening of the new temporary location, Teen Services coordinated a fun candy activity. Teens transformed lifesaver hard candies and colorful fruit licorice into fun and edible bracelets and necklaces while getting acquainted with the new teen space. A teen ambassador helped to staff the event. Families were also given information about library programs and services. Friends' funds were used to purchase program supplies.

Teen Ambassador Program (TAP)

Teen Ambassador Program (TAP) Ambassadors gather once a month to discuss library news, program ideas, and more. TAP is rotating between Appleton East, Appleton West, & Appleton North High Schools for meeting locations to engage new members and facilitate accessibility to existing members. Teen ambassadors have been tasked with brainstorming ideas for different projects including our 2024 Teen Summer Library Program, Operation Cinderella, and more. Friends' funds purchased snacks for this program.

Teen Tuesday

Teen Services continues to offer Teen Tuesdays in 2024 throughout the community. The January program was held at the Fox River Mall and featured basic finger knitting as demonstrated by a parent volunteer. Teens loved the selection of yarn colors and showcased their creations. Inspired by the program and wanting to expand on this craft, they were inspired to purchase additional skeins of yarn after the program. Friends' funds helped purchase the program supplies.

Children's Classes and Events

Family Classes and Events

January – March Memorial Park StoryWalk

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

When the Snow is Deeper Than My Boot by Jean Reidy

Love Monster and the Last Chocolate by Rachel Bright

So Much Snow by Kristen Schroeder

These books were unassembled and then reassembled as StoryWalk pages for the months of January - March. 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.

Adopt a Reading Buddy

On February 24th we had 554 people attend our Adopt a Reading Buddy event for kids 0-12 years old. Each child got to choose a stuffed animal to adopt (dog, cat, hamster, unicorn, or dragon). They filled out an adoption certificate and promised to read to their buddy every day. Kids got to take a picture at the photo backdrop, make a collar, groom and give their new buddy a vet check-up. The stuffed animals were donated by PetSmart. The collar making supplies and photo backdrop were generously provided by the Friends of the Library.

B.E.A.R. Bingo

In March we had our annual B.E.A.R. Bingo reading program. This year we offered the reading program for children 0-12 years old. In previous years the program was only for 3–12-year-olds because the prizes were choking hazards. 601 children signed up and participated. After completing five reading challenges on their bingo sheet, kids were able to spin the wheel for a prize. Upon completing the program, kids were entered into a grand prize drawing for one of two giant bears. OWLS funded the non-choking hazard prizes for 0–3-year-olds. Friends' funds were used to purchase supplies, prizes for the 4-12 year olds and the grand prizes.

Bubbles

Friends' funds were used to purchase 2 new bubble machines and bubble solution for use in storytime every week. Popping bubbles is one of the highlights of storytime for the kids, but it is more than just fun. Bubbles help children work on visual tracking, hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills. These are transferable skills they will use

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when learning to read and write. It also strengthens their gross motor, spatial and body awareness skills.

Crafty Creators

Crafty Creators is an ongoing school age program for kiddos in grades K-6. This drop-in program allows families to show up between 4pm-7pm to create! Friends' funds were used to purchase supplies used during many crafty creator programs.

Eclipse Program

Friends' funds were used to purchase supplies for solar eclipse craft activities. Many patrons enjoyed learning about the 2024 solar eclipses through tangible crafts. Two eclipse programs were offered this spring to help patrons prepare for the event.

Rainbows and Lucky Clovers

Friends' Funds were used to purchase supplies for the Rainbows and Lucky Clovers program. Children and families listened to stories, sang, and danced. After the stories, families took part in a scavenger hunt and a variety of crafts.

School Age STEAM – February

School-Age STEAM had a highly successful February in our new temporary location with themes of Food Science, Shadows & Light, Potions, and Paint Methods. Our weekly program brought in 205 participants who had fun creating, exploring, and collaborating. Thanks to our Friends' funding, we were able to supply the items needed the program including. We also made use of previously purchased technology.

School Age STEAM – March

In March, our weekly School-Age STEAM program explored themes of Games, Chalk, Travel, and A Look at the Past: 70's Edition. Attendees had experiences of making their own chalk, designing maps with rice, learning the art of macrame, and more. They used technology such as Bee Bots, Lite Brites, OSMOs, and Doodle Boards. Specialty program supplies were purchased using Friends' Funds and the program also made use of previously purchased technology.

Sweet Reopening

Friends' Funds were used to purchase supplies for the Sweet Re-opening Program held in January. Program attendees were welcomed into the building and into the Children's Area with a colorful candy path, stunning pixel art on the wall behind the Children's desk and a variety of candy themed crafts and activities. It was a sweet start to our year at the new College Avenue location.

Jefferson Cookies and Crafts Event

Friends' Funds were used to purchase supplies used in an outreach at Jefferson school. The event was an open house scheduled during parent/teacher conferences. Students attended conferences with their caregivers, visited a book fair, did crafts and activities and had the opportunity to visit the library table where we had activities, a craft and

information about the library.

Programs for All Ages

Ongoing Classes, Events and Services

Special Projects

3D Pens

The Children's Team is so thankful for the use of Friends' funding to purchase three replacement 3D pens! Students are always thrilled to create with such wonderful technology and the pens will be used in a variety of programs.

Building Project Communications

Friends' funds paid for outside printing of various building project communications.

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 Car

Friends' funds were used to purchase a new dramatic play car that will be used in the new library. This car will replace the current beloved car that is in disrepair after years of heavy use.

Hourglass Timers

Friends' funds were used to purchase four hourglass timers (3, 5, 10 & 15 minutes) for use in the Children's Department. The timers are a visual tool for caregivers to help children see how much time they have left before leaving the library.

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.