

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: Fishing in Every Pond – Cousin Baiting

In July, the Find Your Ancestors series welcomed back genealogist Christine Cohen for an informative and jam-packed presentation on tracking down living cousins to uncover family photos, documents, and information on shared relatives. Christine highlighted several genealogy websites and demonstrated how to identify potential relatives in current generations. She also shared strategies for finding people beyond traditional genealogy platforms and offered tips for making successful contact with potential relatives. Attendees appreciated her comprehensive listing of resources and the brief case studies that illustrated these tools in action. Friends provided financial support for this series and an honorarium for this speaker.

Find Your Ancestors: Reconstructing World War I Army Service Records

Our August Find Your Ancestors program featured lecturer Linda Debe, who shared strategies for reconstructing World War I army service records. She explained the types of records available — some easily found online, others requiring more effort due to the 1973 fire at the National Personnel Records Center that destroyed many original files. Using her own grandfather's service as an example, Linda demonstrated how alternative sources like morning reports and army transport records can fill in details on an ancestor's service. Attendees especially appreciated the clear, well-organized handout and Linda's wealth of knowledge on the subject. Friends provided financial support for this series and an honorarium for this speaker.

Find Your Ancestors: Setting Goals to Focus Your Genealogy

The Find Your Ancestors series welcomed professional genealogist Cynthia K. Patton in September for an engaging session on goal setting. Cynthia guided attendees through different types of goals, illustrating each with practical examples from genealogy projects to show how they can be applied personally and effectively. Participants appreciated discovering new strategies for choosing the goal-setting approach that best fit their needs and research goals. One attendee shared, "I think this presentation will really help me to get going again and in a better organized fashion." Friends provided financial support for this series and an honorarium for this speaker.

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.

FRIENDS GRANT PROGRAM SUMMARIES

3rd QUARTER 2025

Phone-to-Pro Portraits with Adam Shea

Professional photographer Adam Shea showed community members how to harness the true power of their smartphones camera and take professional level pictures. This program was designed to help attendees take their own studio-grade headshots for professional and personal purposes. Attendees from every age group were in attendance, from senior adults down to young children. Friends' funds were used to provide an honorarium to the presenter Adam Shea.

Rice, Rolls & Rootz with Mylee Xiong

GingeRootz owner Mylee Xiong presented an informative program that brought attendees into the world of Hmong and Thai culture through cuisine and history, demonstrating how to make the restaurants signature egg rolls and fried rice, and recommendations for sourcing the proper ingredients. Attendees were exclusively adults except for one enthusiastic mother-daughter duo whose favorite restaurant is GingeRootz. Friends' funds were used to provide an honorarium to the presenter Mylee Xiong.

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.

Sip & Savor: A Global Wellness Journey Through Tea

Flavorful Tea Fruit Co. owner Heather Schroeder presented an informative program that brought attendees into the world of tea through a relaxed class designed to help newcomers understand tea types, brewing methods, and how to enjoy tea with confidence with hands-on experiences in tea blending, tea history, global tea ware, and the craftsmanship behind every cup. Attendees were a range of adults, young adults, and one teenager. Friends' funds were used to provide an honorarium to the presenter Heather Schroeder.

Treasures Revealed: Antiques Appraisals with Mark Moran

In July, the library hosted antiques appraiser Mark Moran, known for his appearances on PBS *Antiques Roadshow*. During the three-hour event, Mark evaluated 37 items, including artwork, jewelry, and kitchenware. A highlight of the day was a tramp art frame valued at \$3,000, which Mark called the finest example he had seen in his 50-year career. Attendees enjoyed uncovering the history and value of their treasures, while spectators were captivated by the personal stories behind each item. The program was made possible with support from the Friends, who provided an honorarium for Mark, and support from the Appleton Historical Society.

Teen Classes and Events

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Game On! Teen Gaming

The Game On! Program, offering PlayStation 5, Nintendo Switch, board games, and computer games, has been so successful that we expanded it to twice per week plus a monthly weekend session this fall. Through the work of dedicated volunteers, the program has blossomed into a fun, collaborative, and dynamic program for an underrepresented demographic of teens in previous programs. Friends' funds were used to purchase gaming equipment, games, and refreshments to keep the program attractive and engaging for all teens.

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 Services Takeover

The teen services team and teen summer library intern held a special tabling event in the library commons to celebrate the end of a successful summer program and welcome a new school year. Teens, families, and other visitors alike enjoyed a sneak peek of fall programming, learned about library services and resources, received free books, stickers and got to meet the staff. Friends' funding supported the stickers which were a big hit!

Teen Summer Library Program

The successful 2025 Teen Summer Library Program featured free books, reading logs and prize incentives that encouraged teens to read throughout summer and avoid the summer slide. Teens visited the library weekly to earn stamps and drawing tickets and participated regularly in weekly programs. Friends funding provided the program materials and popular prize incentives.

Teen Summer Library Program-Terrarium Pendants

Teens created unique terrarium glass pendants with glue, moss, and mini figurines in whimsical forest themes. Some participants brought their own mini figurines to personalize their creations, highlighting this popular niche. This activity was a great opportunity for beginners and seasoned participants alike, which the teens enjoyed. Friends funding was used to purchase the crafting supplies.

Teen Summer Library Program-Sweet 'n' Savory Charcuterie

Teens learned about the art and history of charcuterie cuisine, food safety and were introduced to unique kitchen tools in the Flex Box. Fresh vegetables, fruit, nuts, cheese, cold cuts, dips, and other items were used to create balanced, tasty, and visually pleasing food presentations. Teens really enjoyed this program - it was a full house! Friends funding and a Festival Foods gift card were used to purchase food items and trays.

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Teen Summer Library Program-Diamond Painting Magnets

Teens created dazzling diamond art magnets with gem dots in summer-themed patterns. We collaborated with SOAR Fox Cities to help provide a supportive and welcoming opportunity for their program participants with varying abilities. This program was an engaging chance for teens to slow down, be mindful and enjoy an activity with other fellow participants. Friends' funding was used to purchase the magnet sets, paint pens, wax, and mini trays.

Teen Summer Library Program-Teen Puzzle Challenge

We celebrated the end of summer with a fun and competitive teen puzzle challenge. After registering, teens were paired up and randomly assigned a unique 300-piece puzzle to finish in one hour. Teens were focused and determined, fueled by popcorn and relaxing music playing in the backdrop. The winning team and second place winners received their choice of a canvas SLP bag or a new YA book. Friends funding was used to purchase the puzzle sets and popcorn.

Teens Evolve: Teen-to-Teen Care Kits

Teens gathered to create care kits for other teens in need in the community while enjoying conversation and pizza. With a generous donation from the Women's Fund of the Fox Valley Region and The Monthlies Project, the kits included reusable period underwear in varying sizes for school-aged students. Teens created positive and inspirational notes which were included in each kit in addition to stickers. Friends' funding purchased project supplies and refreshments.

Children's Classes and Events

Memorial Park StoryWalk

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

We All Play by Julie Flett

The Hike by Allison Farrell

I am Stuck by Julia Mills

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.

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Craft Around the World

Friends Funds helped bring the Craft Around the World program to life, offering patrons a chance to explore global cultures through stories and hands-on crafts. In July and August, the program highlighted the vibrant traditions of Spain, Nepal, Switzerland, Taiwan, Zimbabwe, New Zealand, and Germany. Each session provided a meaningful way to connect with these countries' unique heritages through creative and culturally inspired crafts.

Crafty Creators

Children's Services utilized Friends' funds to purchase supplies for Crafty Creators. In September the Tuesday night program was well attended. Kids in grades K-6 tried crafts and activities related to summer fun, handprint art, salt art, and color transferring.

School-Age STEAM

July - September Monday afternoon and evening School-Age STEAM programs were well attended. 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 sound, fiber arts, borax fun, Minecraft S.T.E.A.M., earthquakes, and air pressure. Thank you to Friends of Appleton Public Library and the Sandra & Dr. Monroe Trout Endowment Fund for purchasing the supplies and technology to make this on-going program possible! We also continue to use Friends previously purchased technology.

STEM FUN: Exploring DNA

Children's services utilized Friends' funds to purchase supplies for the S.T.E.M. Fun: Exploring DNA program. This three-session program featured in-depth conversation in small group form. The groups explored themes related to genetics, DNA, RNA, antigens, antibodies, germs, family trees, and fingerprints. This program was in partnership with Marshfield Clinic Health System and Wisconsin Out of School Time Alliance.

Summer Library Program – Children's

This year's Summer Library Program had 1,352 children ages 0-12 participate and over 900 complete. Friends funded physical program prizes including books for completion, select Grand Prizes and more.

FRIENDS GRANT PROGRAM SUMMARIES

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Family Classes and Events

Randy Peterson

Library patrons joined Randy Peterson for a musical performance. Woven throughout the performance was information about colors in nature and in space. Friends' Funds were used for performer stipends.

Miller & Mike

Library patrons joined Miller and Mike for a wild circus show including juggling, jokes and more. Friends' Funds were used for performer stipends.

Family Folk Music with Branch

Library patrons joined Branch for two highly interactive folk music performances. Songs encouraged movement, learning and connection. Friends' Funds were used for performer stipends.

Back-to-School Event

School-age patrons, their parents, and teachers enjoyed a Back-to-School celebration at the library! They got to adopt a new "Reading Buddy" for the year with stuffed animals donated by PetSmart. They also made some DIY school supplies such as bookmarks, furry pencils, and desk pets created with clay. While here, they were encouraged to apply for or renew their library cards and connect with our resources. This program was possible with the generous support of our Friends.

Outreach at Marcus Valley Grand

We had a fun outreach table at Marcus Valley Grand Theater for the Bad Guys 2 movie. People came to our table to sign up for a library card or learn about the new library. They could also enter to win one of two different Bad Guys 2 themed prizes. It was very exciting! Thank you to Friends for funding the prizes.

Snacks for Multicultural Book Clubs

Funds from the Friends of the Appleton Public Library were used to provide snacks for the bi-monthly Multicultural Book Club. This program welcomes multilingual families to engage in language-based activities and discover effective ways to support their children's education. It incorporates STEM, reading, math, and social-emotional learning to enhance academic skills and literacy. Families also receive guidance on selecting age-appropriate books, enjoy library tours, and get personalized book recommendations. Snacks are an essential part of the program, helping children stay energized and focused after school.

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Symphony Storytime

July 9 – Kenneth Johnson, trombonist in the Fox Valley Symphony Orchestra (FVSO), joined Miss Karen for a musical morning. We read and sang, *Mary Had a Little Lam* by Tammi Sauer and *Froggy Plays in the Band* by Jonathan London

August 6 – Jennifer Bryan, oboist in the FVSO, joined Miss Karen for as we read, *The Town Musicians of Bremen* by Gerda Muller and *The Oboe Goes Boom, Boom, Boom!* By Colleen Venable

Sept 20 – Bruce Atwell, French Horn player in the FVSO, joined Miss Karen as we read *All the World* by Liz Garton Scanlon and *Barnyard Banter* by Denise Fleming

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.

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.

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.

500 Books Before Middle School and 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten

Friends Funds were used to purchase new prize bins for the ongoing reading programs, 500 Books Before Middle School and 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten. The new prize bins allow for more stability and visibility when children are picking their prizes.

Dramatic Play

Friends' funds were used to continue to support the dramatic play area that is switched out monthly in the Hetzel-Long Wonder Zone. Themes for July, August and September were Ice Cream Shop, Farmer's Market and Hardware Store.

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Field Trip Supplies

Huge thanks to Friends for purchasing lap boards and dry erase markers for students to use during field trips. Visits that gather on the Boldt Learning Stairs can now have a more interactive experience.

Floor Activities Tween Floor Activities

The school-age children absolutely love the magnetic cubes that Friends originally purchased for use on the magnetic board in the nonfiction section. Friends has further helped by purchasing additional sets of cubes to keep interest high and engaging. Friends' funds were also used to replace the engineering/construction set of straws used on the Tween STEAM Table. It is greatly appreciated!

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.