

The Appleton Public Library - A Place Where You Create Your Future!

Celebrate National Library Week from April 10-16. This week provides an opportunity for all citizens to acknowledge the contributions of libraries and library staff, and to promote the use and support of our public libraries. Public libraries are vital to the fabric of every community as they are open to all; providing services, programs and opportunities for anyone to create a successful future.

The Appleton Public Library is truly a gem for our city and deserves many kudos for the daily impact it has on our community. APL provides intergenerational classes, including Creative Writing, in which one participant met her goal of building enough self-confidence to share her writing with others. APL works with parents of diverse populations to introduce the importance of being their child's first teacher through a program called Appleton Ready to Read. One mom said "Yee [an APL librarian] has given me the strength to believe in myself and how to engage with my children; improving my parenting and helping them succeed in school." APL is embarking on a collaborative program with local health providers, called Reach Out and Read. This program brings books and literacy into physicians' offices and waiting rooms; providing for the early learning of infants, toddlers and their parents. These are just a few examples of how our library is creating futures.

The APL Board of Trustees wants to continue this path of excellence, and to do so, we need to stay focused on how we can provide a new building to meet the growing and changing library needs of our community. The facts remain; our library sees an average of 1,200 community members a day walk through the doors; a 100 percent increase since the opening in 1981. Our library needs a flexible facility with more space, which not only meets the current, but also the future needs of the community.

During the recent months, board members and staff have been reviewing best practices from libraries. Last fall, we visited the Milwaukee Public Library-East Branch. This new library space opened in 2014, as a part of a mixed-use development that is also home to 99 apartments and a small retail space. Closer to home, the Kaukauna Public Library now shares space in a development that honors Kaukauna's history and promises to serve as a symbol of Kaukauna's exciting future. Cities across the country are exploring the benefits; financial, service provision and space utilization; of creative solutions such as these. We do not know the specifics of a viable solution for our future, but we are committed to finding one that will reflect Appleton's best interests and needs.

In addition to this research, myself and our assistant director, are serving on the Appleton Comprehensive Planning Steering Committee, allowing us to be a part of the larger vision for Appleton. Our director is involved with the downtown mobility study, which will inform our location selection. She also serves on the long-term solution taskforce for the Thompson Community Center; another opportunity for collaboration to solve community issues.

A new library plan should elicit great energy and excitement to create a place that shows what Appleton values: its citizens, lifelong learning and opportunities for everyone to create a future.

I urge you to reach out during National Library Week; visit the library, check out the [website](#) and be amazed at all that is offered, and thank a library staff member or volunteer. Celebrate our "gem", the Appleton Public Library, and support our future and the future of each member of our community.

Nancy Scheuerman
President, Appleton Public Library Board of Trustees