

A Little Book of BIG Stories

AN IDAHO LIBRARY BOOK

By People Who Use Their Local Libraries

Hundreds of thousands of people depend on Idaho libraries not only to check out books, but to enrich their lives. Like the great Idaho landscape itself, Idaho libraries inspire a love of freedom and a humility that accompanies wonder.



SPECIAL
EDITION
2024

VOICES FROM AROUND THE STATE

A Little Book of BIG Stories

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By People Who Use Their Local Libraries

Presented by

The Community Library Association
in collaboration with the
Idaho Library Association
January 2024

A Little Book of **BIG** Stories

AN IDAHO LIBRARY BOOK

Testimonials compiled by
The Community Library Association
in collaboration with the Idaho Library Association
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*Download These
Stories Here!*



About This Book

THIS BOOK IS MODELED after the Armed Services Editions, books that were printed and sent to American military personnel during World War II. The small books were developed by the Council on Books in Wartime, an ambitious collaboration between librarians, publishers, booksellers, and the War Department. The paperbacks, the first of their kind, were designed to fit in a soldier's pocket.

While Nazis in Germany, in dramatic demonstrations, burned millions of books that some deemed subversive, Americans printed more than 122 million copies of over 1,300 titles of fiction,

nonfiction, and poetry, and distributed them to service men and women around the world. Americans took courage in books.

The Armed Services Editions were hugely popular. Reading provided a reprieve from homesickness and the horrors of war, and it celebrated the freedom of each individual imagination, even in stifling situations. The books were read voraciously by soldiers in all kinds of conditions—from trenches to hospital beds. The motto of the Council on Books in Wartime was, “Books are weapons in the war of ideas.”

Like the Armed Services Editions, this small Idaho library book celebrates the right to read freely, as well as the power of stories to expand our humanity, even in—especially in—trying times.

The testimonials in this book provide a glimpse into the big work of libraries across Idaho: More than 150 local libraries serve the people of this vast state, from Sandpoint to Twin Falls, Downey to Emmett.

Hundreds of thousands of people depend on these libraries not only to check out books, but to enrich their lives. Like the great Idaho landscape itself, Idaho libraries inspire a love of freedom and a humility that accompanies wonder.

These testimonials describe the delight of story times and game nights, chess clubs and craft nights. They describe parents reading to children, a widow making new friends, people using the computers to pay bills and earn college degrees, veterans getting together. They describe people finding comfort through reading. They demonstrate the brave and generous capacity of Idahoans to talk to each other, learn from each other, and show empathy toward each other.

This is a story of Idaho, as lived through its well-loved libraries.

—*Jenny Emery Davidson*
The Community Library
Ketchum

About the Idaho Library Association

THE IDAHO LIBRARY ASSOCIATION is almost as old as Idaho, the Gem State. At the formational meeting of the Idaho Library Association on December 29, 1915, the twelve librarians in attendance crafted an organizational constitution founded on a commitment “to promote the library interests of the state of Idaho.” The commitment of these intrepid librarians extended beyond the newly constructed Carnegie libraries that provided permanent locations for library collections and services. Librarians in Idaho routinely traveled on horseback and by carriage to provide library materials to Idahoans dispersed throughout the vast expanses of Idaho’s mountains, plains, and prairies.

The horses and carriages no longer traverse the dusty and rutted pathways of Idaho’s past. The Idaho Library Association has grown and changed over the years, as well. Membership in the Idaho Library Association has grown from that first group of twelve. Our membership is now in the hundreds and represents library workers, library trustees, and library supporters across the state. The short messages found in this *Little Book of Big Stories* from Idahoans across the state are testimonies to the positive and enduring impacts that librarians and libraries have on their communities.

Our commitment to promoting literacy, supporting independent thought, and advocat-

ing for the freedom of individuals to access information that is relevant to them as guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution remains as strong as ever. Idaho's librarians continue to provide professional information services to their communities, schools, and organizations. Gem State librarians, and the libraries they care for, curate, and manage on behalf of the Idahoans they serve, are deeply beloved. The commitment to excellence in "library interests" in Idaho means a lot of things to a lot of Idahoans. The Idaho Library Association is humbled by the library experiences shared by Idahoans. We are proud to serve the information needs of Idahoans, whether those needs are met by a children's storytime, a community event, a club, a traveling educational exhibit, an electronic

database, or a physical book. The Idaho Library Association is here to support the information needs of all Idahoans, which are as unique as Idaho's great outdoors.

We hope you enjoy the Big Stories about Idaho's beloved libraries in this Little Book.

—*Lance McGrath*
President
Idaho Library Association

This Is a Library. This Is Love . . .

THE CRAIGMONT COMMUNITY LIBRARY is just that: a community library. Take, for example, a Friday. When our family arrives for story time, the warmth of the air and the librarian's face give a reprieve from the freezing outdoors. The space is already quietly teeming with school-age kids who have taken refuge for this no-school day.

The hubbub briefly increases as the littlest ones excitedly greet friends they only get to see once a week—friends they never would have met without Story Time. A hushed anticipation, punctuated with questions about the book the librarian is holding, indicates Story Time has

started. We sip coffee and enjoy the respite, watching our little charges soak in the story. After the formal story time is over, the librarian kindly agrees to read favorite stories brought to her from the shelf.

With a contented smile I think, “*This*. This is a community. This is a library. This is love.” And I am grateful.

—*Karista Bradley*
Craigmont Community Library
Craigmont

No Walls around Knowledge and Culture

OUR LIBRARIES are nexus points for learning and research and gathering places for people and ideas. The Community Library in Ketchum and Hailey Public Library in Hailey are essential community assets.

Our libraries are also sanctuaries for reading and study, where librarians are always helpful in tracking down interlibrary loans. We come here to be surprised. Browsing the stacks is the best way to discover new books outside of the algorithmic and commercialized Internet search methods.

We also can enjoy a wide range of presentations from current authors. In our rural area, libraries function as free universities where there are no walls around knowledge and culture. A good library is as important to civilization as wine and olive oil.

—*Tony Tekaroniake Evans*
Hailey Public Library and
The Community Library
Hailey and Ketchum

Kids Interact . . . Learn and Develop Together

THE DEMARY LIBRARY is a big help to me and my family! My kids, ranging from age two to ten, love being able to find many books matching their interests and reading/attention levels. If we didn't have the library, they would not be able to develop a love for reading like they can with this range of books at their disposal.

In addition to the books, our library has many educational toys and games, of which my family loves taking advantage! This is especially helpful when we have inclement weather!

Lastly, we love the activities the library provides such as Story Time and STEM activities. Here the kids get to interact with other kids their age and learn and develop together. We appreciate our Library!

—*Jessica Brady*
DeMary Memorial Library
Rupert

The Heart of Our Community

MY LIBRARY is the public library in Bellevue, Idaho.

It reminds me of the story *The Little Engine That Could*. In the story, the little blue engine worked hard to help the big train get over the mountain so the girls and boys could have their toys and be happy.

Every year, the little Bellevue Public Library fights hard to keep its doors open so the people of Bellevue can have a library and be happy.

I love this library because I can walk to the library from my house, and read books without buying new ones or worrying about overdue fees.

I love this library because I see how many young people visit the library after school and during their summer reading program.

The library is a safe place for people, young and old, especially when they have nowhere else to go.

This little library is the heart of our community, always fighting to stay open. To me, *it's the little library that could*.

—Maggie Shaughnessy
Bellevue Public Library
Bellevue

An Invaluable Part of Our Lives

WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL, I loved visiting the library with my parents and brother. As a homeschool student, a favorite part of my day was spent snuggling with my mom reading history stories from her library stack aloud.

I remember going with my dad to look up *Consumer Reports* when I was researching my first car. As a newlywed, I enjoyed checking out cookbooks to try new recipes. When I became a mom, I cherished those sweet moments of cuddling my babies on my lap while singing songs and listening to stories.

As my children have gotten older, one of my favorite things is watching them eagerly gather on the couch to look through their book bags. Now we are a homeschooling family of five, and the library is an even more invaluable part of our lives. From living books, to new board games, to fun toys for my preschoolers, we've been able to save thousands of dollars while making so many happy memories together.

We are so thankful for our local libraries!

—*Melissa Zupo*
Kuna Library
Kuna

There Is Always Something for Everyone

HIGHLIGHTS OF MY LOVE for the McCall Public Library:

1. The Library is a gathering place for families. In the early years it was story time. As the kids grew, it was after-school crafts and games. It provides a gathering place for adults to learn and share experiences.

2. Librarians are witnesses to the community. These public servants see our kids grow up, they point us to resources that address our curiosities, concerns, conflicts. They see us grow and change over the years.

3. The Library brings the BIG world into contact with our local world. I love how the librarians offer their own recommendations as well as solicit ones from our kids.

4. We have always used the Library as a meeting place, as in, “Let’s all meet at the Libe and then go . . . ” It is wonderful to have a safe place to meet, where you don’t have to buy anything, where there is something for everyone.

5. Currently, I mostly use Libby. I LOVE the option to listen to books on the move.

6. My grown child is starting to play *Dungeons and Dragons* with the Library group and is beside herself with excitement to find like-minded creatives.

7. I love the welcoming atmosphere of our library.

—Kasey Rose
McCall Public Library
McCall

Solace and Adventure within the Library's Shelves

OUR LOCAL LIBRARY holds an invaluable place in our family's life, fostering growth, learning, and togetherness. For my 14-year-old son, it's a hub of knowledge where he explores his interests in science, technology, and history through an extensive collection of books and online resources. The library's teen programs also provide a supportive space for him to engage with peers and expand his horizons.

My 11-year-old daughter finds solace and adventure within the library's shelves, devouring novels that transport her to fantastical worlds while also using its resources for school projects. The library's workshops and storytelling sessions have nurtured her love for creativity and storytelling.

Even my 5-year-old son cherishes the library's colorful children's section, filled with vibrant

books and interactive activities that spark his imagination. Storytime sessions and educational games have become a highlight of his week, fostering a love for reading and learning from an early age.

Beyond books, the library's inclusive environment allows us to spend quality family time, whether it's attending events together, participating in workshops, or simply exploring new interests as a unit. The local library isn't just a building with books; it's a cornerstone of our family's growth, education, and connection.

—*Tennille*

Portneuf District Library
Pocatello

Smiling, Helpful Librarians Right at Hand

HELLO, I'M ED, a Vietnam vet who uses our great Community Library in Ketchum most days of the year. Why do I research and write here? Well, a prominent wall inside our library is painted with the mission, "History and culture and ideas are not only held here. THEY ARE BORN HERE."

And that's why the study desks in our Community Library are perfect spots for me to work on my novel-in-progress, *Fugitive's Return*. The projected book, set along the Arizona-Mexico border, features flashbacks to the Vietnam War narrated by a soldier still suffering from PTSD in the present day. The soldier in the novel is named Payne ("pain")—but he is definitely not me. I was luckier in Nam than that. Payne is a fictional character who encapsulates the PTSD suffered by many of our soldiers returning from fights in

WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. One of many strands in the novel is picturing our soldiers who return home "emotionally wounded" from our sometimes futile wars.

Anyway, our beautiful Community Library makes it possible for me, finally, to write this novel-in-progress with research materials and smiling, helpful librarians right at hand. And might I add—in peace!

—*Ed Grant*

The Community Library
Ketchum

The Library Filled That Void for Me

WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL in Mountain Home, the old library (by the *MH News*) was my sanctuary. I could hardly wait until I was old enough to get books upstairs and get my adult library card, and to be able to see and talk to Joy the librarian all the time. They had a wooden table upstairs where Joy was. I loved sitting at that table, reading the names and the messages and the years of the kids before me. This table had been carved into by many, many kids from years and years ago. You could not do your homework on that silly table.

Growing up poor and not having much money for activities, the library filled that void for me. I was able to check out as many books as I wanted

and able to spend hours looking at books at my library—all for free. No time limit at the library, and no one telling me *you can't afford this*, just me and my book for as long as I wanted.

The library in my hometown is one of the best around.

—Laurie L. Mondloch
Mountain Home Public Library
Mountain Home

A Beehive of Residents

TWIN FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY is a beehive of residents representing all ages, economic, and educational levels. Community quilts are displayed, teens select books from their special area, folks check out craft kits, books on tape, music CDs, and, of course, BOOKS. Students can study in “booths” and get assistance in researching topics for school or personal interest. Everyone can meet friends, read magazines, bring children for activities and socializing, and hear music from local entertainers. Services extend to borrowing books through interlibrary loans in a very speedy fashion and offering suggestions for new reading adventures.

Our Library is multipurposed, constantly looking for ways to update services, and it is free!!

During COVID, our Library offered curbside pickup.

Twin Falls is home to one of only two Refugee Centers in Idaho. As a retired teacher of English Language Learners, I can attest firsthand how important our local Library is to our immigrants and their teachers. Where else can our families have free use of computers and printed materials to help them become literate citizens of our country?

I can't imagine Southern Idaho without Twin Falls Public Library! There is something for everybody!

— *Sonnie Strolberg*
Twin Falls Public Library
Twin Falls

Dream and Learn and Grow

“I HAVE ALWAYS IMAGINED that paradise will be a kind of library,” wrote Jorge Luis Borges, the great short story writer and essayist. Fortunately for those of us who love books, they are also paradises on earth, free and welcoming spaces where both kids and adults can dream and learn and grow.

Libraries provide essential services to communities like Fairfield, where I live, becoming the gathering place for residents and the heart of the town.

I serve on the Camas Library Foundation Board, and I also write books, and I know firsthand how important libraries are, how they allow us to flourish and connect, and create healthy, thriving individuals and communities.

—*Judith Freeman*
Camas Library
Fairfield

A Small Library . . . a Big Heart

I WOULD LIKE to write this short note to express how wonderful the Stanley Library and its library staff have been to me over the years. Having lived in Stanley for over twenty years, I often utilized their services. They truly enrich the small community with many extras: monthly craft programs, rotating informative displays in the front cabinets, a lively children's reading space with comfortable furniture, etc. For such a small library, they have a big heart!

But when I became a widow five years ago, they really became important to my life. The library became a part of my social life and helped ease my social isolation. The monthly book club meetings offered warm fellowship, stimulating book discussions . . . and warm soup. The librarian

Liesl helped me with computer lessons so I could pursue some online college art courses. And senior librarian Jane always kept fresh new books readily available. Jane has been instrumental in maintaining top-notch quality and providing a welcome array of programs and literature . . . a welcome respite for the community during the long cold winters in Stanley.

I could write many more pages of gratitude, but this note will have to suffice for now. Just know that the Stanley Library is a community treasure.

—*Leah M. Holce*
Stanley Community Library
Stanley

Find, Read, Research, Debate

I'VE BEEN A PATRON of the library for twenty years, a trustee for six, and an ongoing volunteer for about a decade.

I'm proud to be a small part of an institution that offers so much to the community, regardless of individual points of view, allowing the entire community the opportunity to find, read,

research, and debate what matters to each of us, and to learn from one another.

What a gift it is for us to have such a wide range of options available to everyone.

—*Beverley Robertson*
The Community Library
Ketchum

Our Main Community Gathering Place

I AM HERE almost daily. If I ask my children where they want to go, they usually say, “The library!” I love the books and resources, the kind librarians, and that I have a quiet, safe place to study and learn.

I attend their excellent Book Clubs, for myself and my children. I use the computers. We attend teen activities, and Toddler Time, and their summer reading program is a highlight of our summers. And, of course, I check out stacks of books for myself and my family.

We are a small community, and the library is our main community gathering place. It provides free programs and resources for young families to

seniors. Every event they sponsor is a success, and we are so grateful for how they gather our community. Our library is well used and LOVED.

I love books. It is calming and mind expanding to learn from the latest and greatest authors. Anything I desire to learn, I can usually find at the library. Things I had no idea I wanted to learn, I find here. For me, the library is an AMAZING use of funds for our community.

—*Candice*
Madison Library District
Rexburg

Doing Democracy

AS A 40-YEAR PATRON of the McCall Public Library, and resident of the city, I and other city residents recently had the opportunity to increase our taxes by voting for the much-needed library expansion bond levy. Passage of the bond was far from easy, coming at a time when taxpayers were weary of additional taxes. The passage of the bond clearly articulates the position our library and librarians hold in our hearts.

A library-sponsored program, now in its fourth year, is uniquely incredible. “Doing Democracy,” the brainchild of two local public-school educa-

tors (one retired) and a member of the library staff, functions via a format focused successfully on civil discourse, respect for all opinions, and that all can safely share their thoughts without fear of reprisal. Attendees leave with more awareness of the complexity of topics, and why others might have different perceptions.

—*Linda Klind*
McCall Public Library
McCall

Building Self-Confidence

AS A FATHER, the library provides me with more than a wide selection of books. It provides a place to connect with the local community. The friendly staff give my kids an opportunity to interact and ask for help on their own, building self-confidence.

Their library cards also provide an opportunity for them to learn responsibility and accountability outside of home and school.

—*Mike Thomas*
Latah County Library District
Moscow

Advocates for Civil Discussion

LIBRARIES HAVE always been vital to civilizations. They are the places where knowledge is stored, shared, and preserved; places where knowledge in all its forms and diversities is available for consideration and discussion.

There should be no fear in letting the masses read books for themselves and come to their own conclusions about a topic. My library in Ketchum, Idaho, encourages reading, promotes literacy, advocates for civil discussion, and offers a safe space to explore the whole wide world.

The world is not made up of one group, tribe or political viewpoint, and local libraries provide a window into other worlds. Let us remember that explorers cannot be afraid to go out and see what is beyond their backyard.

—*Kelly Noble*
The Community Library
Ketchum

I Cannot Imagine Living in a Place Without a Library

RANKING UP THERE with good public schools, a quality grocery store, and access to trails and public spaces, a robust and engaging library is one of the elements by which I measure quality of life in a place.

In my former home state of Alabama, the Hoover Library served as my second living room, a meeting spot, and a comfortable place to research, read, and write. Parts of my first book were written there.

In Donnelly, a tiny library in a cabin provides an oasis in an internet-provider desert, after-school

programs for local schoolchildren, and a place to escape from my Walden-size writing cabin.

In Ketchum, The Community Library has helped me connect with smart, engaged readers through writing workshops and talks about my books. As a reader, writer, and lover of books, I cannot imagine living in a place without a library.

—*Kim Cross*
Library! at Bown Crossing
Boise

My Favorite Building in Town Besides the Church

THE LOCAL LIBRARY is my favorite building in town besides the church.

For our little mountain town of Clark Fork (population 530), our library is a local hub: there's always something going on there. Whether internet or printing, games for kids, checking out items from the Library of Things, tech tutoring (my favorite), music or books, the library has about everything we need, except groceries and hardware.

I love wandering into the library to find my next read, settling into a cushy chair to peruse for a while. I'm an avid reader, but I rarely buy books: I simply request what I want on the library's website, and if they don't have it, they get it for me. *What's not to love?*

—Doug Flückiger
Clark Fork Library
Clark Fork

“The Library Can Help You”

MY NAME IS Mariia and I came to Sandpoint, Idaho, with my two little girls in August of 2022. We were forced to move to the USA because a bloody war began in our country. We weren't prepared for a new life, language, and different cultures.

Someone said to me, “The library can help you.”

When I came to the library in Sandpoint, I could just say, “My name is Mariia and I need help. I need to speak English.” Everyone was very kind to me and immediately began to help me. They found me a wonderful English teacher and I am still learning English. School kids of all ages

like to hang out at the library after school and the library offers many exciting events for them. These events take place all year around. There is even a story time offered at the beach in summer!

I am very grateful to everyone at the library. I would like to see a similar library program for kids and adults in my city of Dnipro, Ukraine.

—*Mariia*

East Bonner County Library District
Sandpoint

Cheers—Minus the Alcohol

DO YOU ALL REMEMBER the old sitcom *Cheers*, the bar where everyone knows your name, the place where you all feel welcome?

Well, the McCammon Library is my *Cheers* minus the alcohol. The library is filled with kind ladies that greet me warmly, make sure I find the books I'm looking for, and ask me how I'm doing.

Our library is filled with a large variety of books, fiction and nonfiction, and movies, and if

they don't have what you're looking for, they will do their best to get it for you! My library is a happy place, a warm fuzzy on a cold day.

—*Susan*
McCammon Library
McCammon

A Vital Resource for Our Seasonal Employees

IN A TOWN the size of Stanley having a library as vibrant as we do is a huge plus.

My two young kids look forward to weekly Story Time and many other seasonal events. It also gives my youngest daughter, who is 3, and me a place to go during the week.

During the summer the library is a vital resource for our seasonal employees as well. We do not have internet access in our employee housing and they utilize the library for their internet needs.

—*Erin Wilson*
Stanley Community Library
Stanley

She'll Go to Bed Early

THIS LIBRARY has made a big difference in my two-year-old's life because it gives her opportunities to interact with other children since she does not attend day care or preschool. Plus, the night before, when I tell her tomorrow is library day—she'll go to bed early!

The library has more wonderful activities than any other library I've been to! We visit regularly

to check out books and attend special events, but our favorite is the Wednesday “Wiggles and Giggles” time!

The library is one of the most important aspects of a community—but the Lewiston Library is a 10 out of 10!

—*Taylor Smith*
Lewiston Public Library
Lewiston

Indulge My Mind's Endless Curiosity

DURING MY last 36 years in the Valley, the two constants in my life have been being a life-long reader and devotion to The Community Library.

We have both moved with pulsing, persistent changes. Wallowing through the Library has enabled me to indulge my mind's endless curiosity, as my loss of physical mobility has joyously made possible the time for ever more reading hours.

My gratitude for living with The Community Library is ever-present awareness. I should stop now, or this will get very sloppy with my feelings and admiration for the extraordinary staff so willing to search, suggest, spoil, etc.

—*Andrea White*
The Community Library
Ketchum

We Love the “At Home” Feeling

MY FAMILY moved to Shelley back in December of 2021. We have three little kids and were looking for things to do in our little community. My husband suggested that I take our kids to the library, and I tell you, that was the best thing I could have done. We all feel so welcome when we walk in the door, all of the workers are so friendly and helpful.

We've been to the story times and to different activities for the kids and they just always leave

having had a great experience. They love learning on the children's computers, playing with the train table, dressing up as different characters, and putting on fun little puppet shows! We love the “at home” feeling our library gives us.

—*Reesa Walters*
North Bingham County Library
Shelley

You Can Feel How Much She Cares

WE LOVE coming to the McCammon Library for multiple reasons. First off, Wednesday story time is a highlight of the week for my kids because of the various crafts, songs, and stories that are read. Miss Linda knows the children by name and really connects with each child. You can feel how much she cares about you when you attend.

Another reason we appreciate our local library is the staff are welcoming and assist us in making book suggestions or finding the specific books we are looking for.

Combing through the shelves of books and checking them out has instilled a love of reading in my home. Discovering a new story is an exciting part of the experience!

Lastly, we enjoy the STEAM activities and rotating community puzzle. The STEAM activities are thoughtfully prepared and touch upon various topics that teach my children new skills and about the world. The puzzle is a fun way to spend a few minutes working together on a common goal.

—*Arianne Hunsaker*
McCammon Public Library
McCammon

Small Rural Libraries Make a Difference to the People

ALBERT EINSTEIN is quoted to have said, “The only thing that you absolutely have to know is the location of the library.” I have lived in many different places—countries, cities, states—and the first thing I have always done in each place is to locate the library, and get a library card.

Every library I’ve ever been in has had the same comforting aura of books, peace, and belonging. Our Craigmont Community Library is a hub of activity—from the Summer Reading Program, Aerospace, and Story Time for our littles, to the monthly Book Club and the annual Book & Bake Sale. Homeschoolers can come and borrow new resources, and socialize at the same time. Avid bookworms can always find a new obsession,

and gamers can come and compare notes and play together.

Major libraries in bustling metropolises may see a larger number of patrons and a wider variety of books and media. But it is the small, rural libraries in communities like Craigmont that really make a difference to the people.

Henry Ward Beecher said, “A Library is not a luxury but one of the necessities of life.” We tend to agree.

—*Rebecca Lauritzen*
Craigmont Community Library
Craigmont

You Feel Like You Belong There

WE LOVE OUR LOCAL LIBRARY!

My kids especially love the Maker Space, where they can walk after school and create to their hearts' content! They always come home with some silly contraption of glue, popsicle sticks, googly eyes, etc. Our librarians have helped them sew things and create patches for mending as well.

I love that our librarians know most people by name and make you feel like you belong there. I often ask for book recommendations, and they always help me find just the right read.

—*Mary Burton*
Valley of the Tetons Library
Driggs

I Earned a Degree Online

WITH THE HELP of the library, I earned a degree online. I reached my educational goals using library internet access, bookable study rooms, interlibrary loan, and the expertise of my friendly, resourceful local librarians.

—*Aly Wepplo*
The Community Library
Ketchum

My Favorite Place to Play with My Friends

THIS LIBRARY is fun and friends can connect through books.

—*Hadley* (age 8)
Craigmont Community Library
Craigmont

I LOVE MY LIBRARY because it has a lot of books to choose from. I love that I can come and play Xbox with my friends at the library. It is my favorite place to play with my friends.

—*Andrew* (age 8)
Craigmont Community Library
Craigmont

Wonderful Community Connections

I CONSIDER MY public library to be one of Moscow's best features.

I visit my library many times each week, and every time I stop in, I witness wonderful community connections being made. My library starts this ball rolling by providing great programs for all ages and a safe, welcoming location for these

programs to happen. Our librarians are personable and helpful, and I'm so grateful for the always expanding pool of resources and materials available to all of us library users.

—*Sue Byrne*
Latah County Library District
Moscow

My Kids Have Grown Up in Our Community Libraries

EVEN BEFORE I BEGAN to work at the library, libraries were a huge part of my life.

My testimonial is for the Winchester Library. From the moment I stepped through the doors I was welcomed by the bright and bubbly Chris.

At first I was just bringing my kids to the many programs that were offered throughout the summer. The next summer I was so in love with the environment that I found myself volunteering and running a kindergarten readiness program each summer while I was out of work—at the time I was a preschool teacher.

My kids have grown up in our community libraries and I'm blessed to say their lives are filled with wonderful enriching memories.

—*Megan Widmier*
Winchester Community Library
Winchester

A Universe with Hundreds of Different Worlds

THE LIBRARY holds centuries of knowledge in one place. I love how the library is such a calm and cozy place but can take you anywhere, be it a mythical kingdom or a different person's mind. The librarians are also some of the best people I've ever met! I can travel for miles in the world of books.

—*Charlotte*
East Junior High Library
Boise

I LOVE MY LIBRARY because it is a calm place to read, and the librarians are very kind. I love reading because I like learning about other worlds (even fictional ones) and it is a hobby of mine.

—*Adela*
East Junior High Library
Boise

THE LIBRARY is like a universe with hundreds of different worlds. You can find almost anything in a library.

—*Joiya*
East Junior High Library
Boise

I'VE ALWAYS ENJOYED spending time in the school library. It's always been a nice, comfortable spot to hang out. The library staff offer wonderful company.

At times I wouldn't have the money to buy a new book, so I could always rely on the library to have a good book.

—*Genevieve*
East Junior High Library
Boise

So Grateful We Have a Library in Our Community

I'VE UTILIZED THE LIBRARY as a patron but also as a grandma. When my grandson was young, he enjoyed story time, Lego time and all the wonderful activities they provided free. I don't know how many books I've checked out and read, but I'm so grateful I didn't have to buy them. I even took our

“Activity Day” girls to the library. The library gave them a tour as well as a fun scavenger hunt so they could learn all the resources. So grateful we have a library in our community.

—*Karen Harris*
Emmett Public Library
Emmett

Quiet and Calm

I LIKE THE LIBRARY because I feel warm and cozy. I also adore the library because if I need help finding a book, I always find the right one. Also, I like the library because it is quiet and calm. Lastly, I am working on Spanish and the library has lots of books that can help me. These are some reasons I love the library.

—*Luke* (age 10)

Alturas Elementary School Library
Hailey

Gateway to Friends

THE LIBRARY is central to my local life. When I moved to town, I found that volunteering at the library was the gateway to friends in the community and an understanding of the community culture.

I love being able to check out the books and videos that are my main focus of entertainment as well as the jigsaw puzzles and the kill-o-watt meter that have benefited my family.

This year I've started attending the Tutoria to help non-English speakers with conversational English and I am hoping to start attending the Tuesday evening English/Spanish conversation nights soon.

The library is still one of the best, most innovative, and most whole-community-oriented offerings in our town.

—*Elizabeth Jeffrey*
Hailey Public Library
Hailey

Endless Curiosity Is Welcomed

WE LOVE THE LIBRARY because it's a place of learning, community, resistance, creativity, and fun! A place where endless curiosity is welcomed, and there are no limits placed on what you can explore (except, perhaps, hours in the day).

For Alby, for whom the entire world is brand new and unknown, the library is a place where he gets to fill in his picture of the world and how it works, book by book.

—*Amanda Moulton*
Hailey Public Library
Hailey

A Quiet Place for Thinking

THE LIBRARY matters as I mainly use it as a quiet place for studying and work, and for thinking. I enjoy access to the many resources offered, all the books, magazines, board games. I especially enjoy books that challenge my thinking and satisfy my curiosity of the world.

—*Kevin Ma*
Latah County Library District
Moscow

Find Many Great Things in a Library

MY MOTHER taught that a library is a special place. She was a child during the Great Depression and had very little—little food, cardboard in shoes, no electricity, and little wood for heat. The library was the place she could go to read for an escape from hard times.

From this experience she instilled in me that I, too, could find many great things in a library.

I moved to Mountain Home and lived across from the old Carnegie Library. Oh, what joy I felt when I met Mrs. Rubery. I was a single mom and she welcomed me and my small daughter with open arms. “Kristen,” she would say, “Look what a great book this is. I know you will like it when your mom reads it to you.”

I have attended lectures on architecture, trains, and geology. I have seen plays, made fun crafts and art exhibits. The staff has changed during the fifty years I have been going, but they are always helpful.

You never know what you might find when you open that library door, just like you never know what you will find in a book until you open its cover.

A special place indeed.

—*Connie*

Mountain Home Public Library
Mountain Home

Inspire, Encourage, and Educate

THE LIBRARY, with its friendly faces and stories, has been a staple of my childhood, helping me become a person I'm proud of today.

As I've grown, I've come to appreciate my local library's significance as a cornerstone of my community. Not only does it inspire, encourage, and educate many children and adults, but it also provides a safe place with free food, shelter, and a charming librarian who's always willing to listen and lend a helping hand. The library's programming encompasses a sweeping range of interests, with story time and crafts for children, art and community interaction for teenagers, and various clubs and educational talks for adults.

The library has countless uses, but one major function is its accumulation of books. My local library boasts thousands of books by innumerable authors. These authors come from many different ethnicities, situations, and cultures, and they need to be able to express their individuality in their writing. Banning books abolishes our right to speak, learn, and think for ourselves.

The library is the glue that holds our community together.

—*Brooke* (8th grade)
Hailey Public Library
Hailey

Treated with Respect and Kindness

MY FAMILY and I visited the library to check out books for our five-year-old daughter. She has autism and can be difficult to understand and is very excitable.

The lady who was helping us at the front desk was incredibly patient and kind to our daughter. She got our daughter her own library card and let her pick out the design she wanted. She also walked her through how to do the self-checkout for books and carefully explained every step.

This is why we love visiting the library: our daughter was treated with respect and kindness, and it resulted in her loving her experience. I appreciate the care that everyone there shows to the patrons, and I especially appreciate the extra time the librarian took out of her day to help our daughter and give her such a wonderful experience.

—*Anonymous*
Cherry Lane Branch Library
Meridian

Programs that Bring People Together

I LOVE IDAHO LIBRARIES! They are staffed with caring people who help find information and resources for all who want it, story times, and fun activities that ensure more Idaho children enter school ready, and programs that bring people together. They are amazing, and there's nothing like it anywhere else!

—*Stephanie Bailey-White*
Idaho State Librarian
Boise

Transport Us through Time and Space

I AM A FREQUENT PATRON of the Jerome Public Library. I use their audio book app and listen to about 50 books a year. I access their physical books for me and my nine children. This library is a true treasure, I love the staff. They go beyond the call of duty to make our time there a delight.

I have traveled the world. I have floated in the Dead Sea, walked the Via del Rosa in old Jerusalem, ridden a camel in Jericho, seen dolphins on the Belize River and howler monkeys race through the rainforest canopy. All of these real-world adventures pale in comparison to my Library card.

My three brothers and I were raised by a single mom and every dollar had a job and entertainment was far down the list. We could afford a

library card as it was free. It was a passport to brave new worlds. I visited Luke Skywalker long before he made the big screen. I strolled along backroads of Prince Edward Island with Anne Shirley. Arthur C. Clark took me to first contact with aliens on Rama.

These vivid scenes describe the power of literary imagination—to transport us through time and space, to let us walk in another's shoes, and to spark our own creativity. Your childhood library card truly is a precious passport.

—*Gene Kissinger*
Jerome Public Library
Jerome

I Dreamed of Someday Publishing a Book

IN THE SUMMER of 1998, I moved to Idaho because I was in love with a Boise girl. She woke before dawn five days a week, dressed in important-looking clothes, and had important-sounding conversations on a cellular phone as she drove to the important-looking Hewlett-Packard buildings on Chinden Boulevard.

I, on the other hand, generally woke after 9 a.m., put on a T-shirt, and had conversations with the cat. My checking account had \$28 in it. I was halfway through a graduate creative writing program and my ambition that summer was to complete a short story about a little man who eats a suit of armor.

Every day I rode a bicycle to the Boise Public Library. I read. I used the bathroom. I dreamed of someday publishing a book that might wind up on the shelves around me.

One afternoon I gazed out the library window at Boise Linen Supply across the street and thought: what if a woman in my short story works there to support her mother? What if she has a sister who falls in love with the man who eats metal and travels the world with him? And what if I use the story to explore the longings inside each of us to both escape home and to do right by the people we love?

It was the first story I ever wrote that I was proud of. I could not have written it without a place to think, work, and dream.

A public library is more than a storehouse of books. It is a safe public indoor space where every citizen is welcome to chase dreams. You may not have computer skills, you may not have childcare,

you may not have Wi-Fi, you may not have more than \$28 in your checking account, but a public library still grants you access to a climate-controlled space where you can feel safe enough to learn. I'll be forever grateful that I had access to one.

—*Anthony Doerr*
Boise Public Library
Boise

Books that Help Our Learning

WE LOVE THE Downey Public Library. We always feel welcome and helped. The atmosphere is calm and inviting. We love checking out books, getting STEM packets and participating in the reading challenges and activities.

As a homeschooling family, the library provides books that help our learning along. If they don't have the book, they are helpful in getting it for me through interlibrary loan.

I'm really excited for the new tools they are bringing in like the 3-D printer and laser engraver. These are such great resources for the community.

—*Rebecca Bingham*
South Bannock Library District
Downey

Great Social Interactions

WE LOVE OUR local library in McCammon, Idaho. My 4-year-old and I attend story time weekly. She gets so excited for the songs and story. On our drive over each week, she tries to guess what the craft may be. It gives her great social interactions with peers and adults. Before story time, we pick out a few books to read during the following week. She even gets her older brothers to read the books to her, on occasion. There are of-

ten fun activities going on, like the neighborhood book walk they do at our local park. It's a fun way to get out of the house in the fall. We appreciate all that the librarians do and the support that they give families in our community.

—*Crystal Tracy*
South Bannock Library District
McCammon

We Need This Library

I WOULD LIKE TO thank the staff of the Downey Library and those responsible for its continued establishment and maintenance. The library is essential to this community for many reasons.

I am the commander of American Legion Post 21 and as such I work closely with the Veterans Administration assisting area veterans in submitting disability claims and other related matters. The Southeast Idaho VA Manager and I utilize this library's meeting room for six hours each month to conduct this business.

Additionally, I am a member of the Board of Directors for the Marsh Valley Cemetery District and we also utilize these same meeting rooms for our monthly meetings.

The library is essential for all members of our community. As a small country town there is little for our children to do. They gravitate to the library for its scheduled and seasonal activities and programs.

Our elderly lack a Senior Citizen Center. The library serves that function with older community members gathered around the tables doing puzzles or just visiting. Students conduct research here. Ranchers read the latest livestock magazines. The list goes on.

The staff are of the kindest souls—well acquainted with their tasks and very helpful at all times. They keep the facility spotless. The people

of Marsh Valley could not ask for any better folks than these. We need this library. We have lost so many businesses and services in recent years.

This library binds our community, our people, together.

—*Thor Gunderson*
South Bannock Library District
Marsh Valley

Can Make My Spirit Soar

THE TWIN FALLS LIBRARY delivers a bigger gift than I can put my arms around.

When the Outreach Team delivers books, this 79-year-old tells them it is like the Christmas of my childhood. The journeys the books unfold, whether fiction or historical, remove me from the diagnosis of COPD and free me to travel the world of current and past days. The large print books allow my eyes a restful and quick page turning journey. Maybe someday, I will wean myself from pages and try electronic or audio books.

The idea that one can still learn is another treasure of this fine system which brings with it the means to do so. This stimulation can make

my spirit soar while my body breathes artificial air. I smile thinking of the favorite authors I can request, frown at the failures of the Interlibrary System, and rejoice at their successes.

The gratitude of a soul, homebound, released to feel, to fly, to learn through the services provided by the Twin Falls Public Library is a worthy endeavor. Isn't this what every community should have?

—*Mary E. Mullen*
Twin Falls Public Library
Twin Falls

Essential for the Community

WE HAVE BEEN coming to this library for about three years now. We believe libraries are essential for the community, and we appreciate all that they offer.

They have a variety of services. We use the library to use the computer to pay our bills online, and to order online.

We have an opportunity to take books home as well, giving us a chance to enjoy a wide variety of subjects. We also love that we can purchase books. We have enjoyed visiting here; they are so helpful and so personable.

—*Jose and Kim Condemarin*
South Bannock Library District
McCammon

A Second Home to Us

MY CHILDREN and I are more than frequent visitors and participants at the Portneuf Library. In fact, I can say that the Portneuf Library has become a second home to us. The incredible love that is felt by all the staff for every person that comes through its doors is just one of the many things that makes this library needed in our community. The Portneuf Library takes quality time to create something for every child that comes through it. From Music and Movement to Toddler Time to Bright Babies to Story Time that has wonderful handmade crafts for anyone to do.

Another amazing thing this library does is it includes everyone. Portneuf Library takes time

every Wednesday to have a unique story time for those who become over stimulated with noise and distractions. They make every effort and are very aware to include those who are on the ASD spectrum. This library and all that it does makes this community a family and feels like home.

—*Holly Cole*
Portneuf District Library
Pocatello

A Critical Component for a Thriving Community

THE MOUNTAIN HOME PUBLIC LIBRARY has been an essential resource for me for over 40 years. Retired and on a fixed income, as are many in this area, the library is vital. Having access to current event books as well as new offerings from favorite authors is invaluable. A variety of newspapers, magazines and CDs is informative and pleasurable.

I have attended many meetings and classes in the common area as well as the more private meeting room. These areas are convenient for many community events.

Adequate staffing is essential to maintain the excellent quality of service currently afforded to library patrons. A well-funded library is a critical component for a thriving community.

—*Cynthia Henstock*
Mountain Home Public Library
Mountain Home

They Go Above and Beyond

I USE THE library weekly. The people who work here are outstanding, and the facility is always clean. They go above and beyond in finding the books I want. I couldn't be more pleased with their service.

—*Monte Blanchard*
South Bannock Library District
McCammon

They Come to Our Local Park and Check Out Books

FOR SEVEN SUMMERS now the Jerome Public Library has provided the students from the Valley School District an opportunity to have library books throughout the summer. They come to our local park once a week and check out books to kids and community members.

We are from a rural area, and over a 30-minute drive to the nearest library. This has been a tremendous service to our kids and community and has kept the children at Valley School reading throughout the summer.

—*Jamie*
Jerome Public Library
Jerome and Hazelton

The Village We Need While Raising Our Children

I DO NOT READ the same genre of books as my oldest son, but some of the librarians do. When he was younger, I'd consult with the librarians at Lake Hazel Library regularly about which books he planned on checking out and their content.

On one occasion I felt he was too young for a book he was interested in reading. His desire to read the book didn't go away, and after a year we discussed it further. Another librarian isolated the exact pages that were problematic, and we used Post-it notes to cover those passages. We explained

to my son what he'd be missing, and he agreed it was a good idea. My son is now a teenager who stops into the library regularly to discuss books he's read, and even offers suggestions to the staff that he thinks they may like.

The library is the village we need while raising our children, and I'm grateful for their support.

—*Brandi Moreira*
Lake Hazel Library
Boise

A Beloved Part of Our Routine

I'VE LIVED IN IDAHO since 2005. I love it here and hope to raise my family here. I'm a parent to young children, a registered Republican, church goer, family practice physician assistant, and a social worker.

The Lake Hazel Library is among our favorite parts of the community. The librarians know my children by name and suggest books, comics, and other things they enjoy. Did you know there's a guitar, complete with DVD lessons? The layout of the library makes it easy for me to supervise my children. It's a safe and enriching place for my family, a beloved part of our routine.

As a social worker, librarians helped me find books for black foster youth to help them make

sense of their experience. They've helped me find books with relatable characters for a gay young adult, which is important for everyone but especially for survivors of foster care. I've found books that help me professionally that would otherwise be cost prohibitive. Our libraries are more than bookshelves; they are a vital resource for our community. They bring people together, foster learning, and provide solace and strength to those we need it most. We can't afford to lose that.

—*Travis Worwood*
Lake Hazel Library
Boise

Our Two-Year-Old Chose the “Libbaby”

HOW MANY THINGS you have in here without it being overwhelming is insane. It's impressive the amount of resources you guys have available.

—*Monica A.*
Valley of the Tetons Library

THIS IS MY first time here [at Valley of the Tetons Library Makerspace], but I've heard a lot about this space. Being actually here, it really blew my expectations.

—*Maria A.*
Valley of the Tetons Library

WE GAVE OUR two-year-old a choice of non-profits to donate to that she benefits from, and she said “libbaby.” She loves visiting and reading on the couch and drawing pictures.

—*Brendon and Kristin*
Valley of the Tetons Library

JUST WANTED to say thank you for having these [loaner laptops]! It was a total lifesaver while my laptop was out of commission. And thank you for renewing it frequently until I could get a functioning one myself.

—*Anonymous*
Valley of the Tetons Library

Reading and Learning Are Vital

I CAN REMEMBER getting my first library card. I was 5. Going to the Pocatello Public Library was magic and my parents took us often. One of my fondest memories is checking out *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. My dad, who spent part of his childhood in the Jim Crow South, took the time to read the book with me . . . providing context and demonstrating to me why reading and learning are vital to people, communities, and society.

Libraries are essential to a healthy community. They offer a variety of services, materials, and activities that provide opportunities to citizens of all ages to imagine, explore and learn. As a former trustee of the Twin Falls Public Library, it is my experience that the only motive of library staff is to serve their patrons and community.

—*Debbie Dane*
Twin Falls Public Library
Twin Falls

As Americans, We Should be Able to Choose

FROM THE SMALL Carnegie libraries in Idaho to the huge modern Oslo Public Library in Norway, I think libraries are an important resource for all who choose to take advantage of them. They are worthy of our continued support.

I am fortunate enough to be able to use The Community Library in Ketchum, but I enjoy visiting libraries wherever I am. I see and speak with many different users of our library who are there for assorted reasons.

I use the library as a resource for my work as an architect; for researching the history and techniques of my sport; and most recently to learn more about Indigenous people. I peruse a wide range of media and often want to follow up on

topics, issues, etc. The library is the ideal place to pursue these interests.

Books and other materials should never be banned. As Americans, we should be able to choose. If we find something objectionable, we can choose not to use it. It is very important to myself, and others, to have access to a wide range of books and materials.

To continue to be great, Idaho needs to support its libraries.

—*Craig Lawrence*
The Community Library
Ketchum

Developing the Love of Reading in My Children

I AM A PROUD patriot of the Larsen-Sant Library. My family has utilized the library in so many different aspects. We love it!

Currently, my youngest daughter and I are just finishing up a book for the mother/daughter book club. She is my fourth and last one to join and she was so excited to finally be eight and old enough to go, after watching all her siblings attend. We have participated in the BFF club, Preschool Story time, Book Fanatic Challenge, Cookies and a Book, Story Walk-a-Long, Literary Lovers Club, and more.

They are my go-to when my home computer is having issues or when my kids take an inter-

est in loom knitting but I know it's short term, so I borrow a kit. It is very convenient to pick up a red bag, with books already sorted into reading levels, so I can get a collection for each of the kids at their own level.

I'm in a book club with some neighbors and the library is so good to get the books we are reading that month. If they don't already have it, they get one through an interlibrary loan. The library has definitely played a role in developing the love of reading in my children.

—*Courtney Webster*
Larsen-Sant Library
Preston

Other People's Perspectives Open My Eyes and Heart

I LOVE DISCUSSING BOOKS with our library's Book Club. I read books I wouldn't otherwise, and hearing other people's perspectives opens my eyes and heart to experiences and opinions outside of my own life.

—*Julie Rember*
Stanley Community Library
Stanley

It Is a Sanctuary

MY LOCAL LIBRARY goes far beyond books. In Idaho, especially in small and/or rural areas, the library can be the only place in town to hold a meeting, access reliable, high-speed internet, conduct a private telehealth appointment, or serve as the safe afterschool space. It is a sanctuary, a community.

I often enter a library not knowing where I'm headed or how I'm going to get there, wherever there turns out to be. Libraries have always been like this for me, a journey of discovery. It is a getaway. I can dig into my cultural roots in a quiet room and connect with souls past and present.

Our public library benefits our community by promoting literacy, providing a space for learn-

ing and community engagement, and offering resources that may not be readily available elsewhere. It is a place where knowledge is not based on what people can afford, a place where no price can be placed on access to ideas.

A wide range of book choices allows individuals to explore diverse perspectives, enhancing critical thinking and empathy. It contributes to a more informed and well-rounded society.

—*Michael Strickland*
Idaho Board of Library Commissioners
Marshall Public Library
Pocatello

Catches My Imagination and Allows Me to Learn

I HAVE ENJOYED libraries my entire life. As a young reader, I would go to the library with my dad and brother. We would go on Saturday afternoon and just roam all over the library to find that one special book to check out and take home.

In college, it was the place to study and meet other students studying for tests. As a young military officer, my wife and I would check out landscape paintings at the library to furnish our sparsely decorated new apartments.

I still enjoy walking through libraries and finding a book that catches my imagination and allows me to learn and grow.

—*Representative Matthew Bundy*
District 8
(Elmore, Valley, Boise, Custer Counties)

Well Done . . . And Thank You

THE MOUNTAIN HOME LIBRARY has done an outstanding job finding and lending the books I need, both from their own collection and through interlibrary loan.

They sponsor a weekly chess club I attend and provide a venue for chess tournaments, most recently the Idaho Senior Championship which drew entrants from all of the state.

Well done, Mountain Home librarians, and thank you.

—*John*
Mountain Home Public Library
Mountain Home

Overflows with Kindness and Good Energy

It's a space for EVERYONE.

A place to help quiet your mind.

A place to learn something new (about anything).

A place to escape the elements or to just be around other people and escape loneliness.

I never leave without at least one new book to explore.

I love being able to check out a digital or audio-book ANYTIME, even if the library is closed.

I always feel welcome here and see smiles all over.

It overflows with kindness and good energy.

—*Jenn*
Latah County Library District
Moscow

The Wealth of Knowledge We Learn

WE LOVE OUR LIBRARY, so very much. It feels like home, when we walk in, and the librarians know mine and my children's names. Story time is always delightful and my kids look forward to each week.

We know we can go there for a wide variety of reasons, to find a new recipe, to learn about robots, and even sing Christmas songs.

Our little library offers our community so much by way of book clubs, writing clubs, and holiday activities. Thank goodness for libraries and the wealth of knowledge we learn and the friends we know inside them.

—*Caitlin*

North Bingham County Library
Shelley

A Lifelong Habit and Love of Reading

THE LIBRARY is vital to exploring imagination, fostering interest in new and exciting activities, and providing an opportunity to create a lifelong habit and love of reading!

—*Angie Griner*
Latah County Library District
Moscow

We Have Gained Many Friends

I HAVE BEEN taking my son to the library's story time program since he was six months old. He is now a one-year-old. He enjoys going there each week.

We have no close relatives nearby, but through the library we have gained many friends! Not only has it helped him learn social skills, but his familiarity with books and the importance of books has grown.

I am thankful for the North Bingham County staff and the time and efforts they put into their programs and maintenance of the facility. They rock!

—*Tuma Reams*
North Bingham County Library
Shelley

A Broader World View

OUR LOCAL LIBRARY has been part of my routine for nearly forty years. I love libraries in general because they allow me to read such a wide range of books. I can read *The Cat in the Hat* to my grandkids, or a history of World War II, or the latest novel I've heard about, or a book of poetry—and all this gives me a broader world view and helps me imagine and understand.

The library offers so much to so many in this community. When I can't figure out how to do something with technology, there is someone to help me. I can't begin to name how many authors that I have come to listen to in the library, and on so many topics.

I love that my library offers workshops, book clubs, movie nights, and art exhibits in the lobby. I don't know what I would do without all these choices. From the warm cozy children's spaces to the staff at the check-out desk, the list goes on as to why I make my library a part of my regular routines and support their mission to promote reading and learning.

—*Daphne Coble*
The Community Library
Ketchum

I Would Not be Able to Afford the Books . . . If I Had to Buy Them

THE LIBRARY matters to me as I read a lot and I do not have to buy books and have a wonderful selection to choose from. I use the Library shredder for destroying personal information. I also can look up lots of history of Salmon and other places.

The Library matters to the community as it is used for several other things, including two extra rooms that function for meetings, card groups, income tax preparation, book sales, craft sales, etc.

I read a LOT and would not be able to afford the books I have to choose from if I had to buy them. The children's program includes a guitar player who sings children's songs with actions, stories, and a craft project each time.

—*Evelyn Jones*
Salmon Public Library
Salmon

Individuals with Diverse Abilities Have Equal Opportunities

THE PORTNEUF DISTRICT LIBRARY has consistently gone above and beyond in ensuring that individuals with diverse abilities have equal opportunities to participate in library events and programs alongside their peers. The library's dedication to creating inclusive spaces and fostering an environment where everyone feels welcome and valued is truly commendable—from tailored story time sessions to special needs “Trunk or Treats,” Easter egg hunts, and sensory-friendly story time.

It is evident that the Portneuf District Library doesn't just aim to provide access to information and resources but strives to create a sense of belonging and community for everyone. The support and acceptance extended to individuals

with special needs speak volumes about the library's dedication to equity and inclusion.

As a mom to children who have profound needs, it is a heartwarming feeling to know they can go somewhere that is safe and accessible to them. I want to express my sincere gratitude to the entire team at the Portneuf District Library for their tireless efforts in making our community a more inclusive and welcoming place. Your dedication to providing accessible and enriching experiences for individuals of all abilities is making a significant difference in the lives of many.

—*Brandi Shaffer*
Portneuf District Library
Chubbuck

They Are Mentors, They Are Friends

THE LIBRARY in Sandpoint is a great place. From fast internet to 3D printing, this library offers lots of opportunities to participate in interesting activities. I think that the Library has greatly impacted our community by creating a space where people can collaborate, create, and do all sorts of fun activities. The Library has great tutors to help with education, excellent staff, and a large number of events such as Virtual Reality, a Flight Simulator, and arts events, among many others. It also provides a place for clubs and organizations to meet, give talks, and hold more events.

The Sandpoint Library is an excellent place that greatly benefits our community.

And I want to add that I am amazed by your volunteer tutors! They are true professionals in their subjects, but they are so much more than academic tutors—they are mentors, they are friends. I am very thankful to have found great tutors for both of my kids through the Library!

—*Elena Timukhina and son Michael*
Sandpoint Library
Sandpoint

Learning Can Be Fun

THE SHELLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY, and all public libraries, fulfill the need for an introduction to reading and learning activities for children. Our Shelley library offers valuable opportunities for children through story time, Young Einstein, and learning boxes on various topics. Children find that learning can be fun, not tedious.

I grew up in our public library as a child and developed a love of reading. Libraries encourage imagination through a variety of books and activities. I consider being a lifelong learner one of the most important skills we can encourage in children. That begins in the library. My grandson looks forward to story time and seeing his friends that he has met at the library. These kids will go

to school together, so they are building social relationships. The librarians know the kids by name and involve them in story time activities. Everything the Shelley library does is for the education of the kids in some way.

As a high school teacher, I would take my classes to the library. There were so many students who had never been introduced to the library. It is an important resource for the community at all ages.

—*Traci Kirby*
Shelley Public Library
Shelley

Our Six-Year-Old Is a Voracious Reader

THE TWIN FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY has been such an incredible resource for our family. Not only have we utilized and appreciated the more traditional services (our six-year-old is a voracious reader), but we have also loved the early childhood education opportunities with toddler reading times and “Ready, Set, Kindergarten,” and community events like Summer Reading Block Parties and Read and Treats.

We love running into our incredible librarians whether at the library, an event or in the community! They are excellent stewards of our library’s resources.

—*Bethany Sappington*
Twin Falls Public Library
Twin Falls

The Soul of the Community

I CONSIDER our library to be part of the soul of the community. When I first moved to town, one of the first places I went was the library. We were greeted by the friendliest people, who learned our names and welcomed us into the community. I had small children at the time and we regularly made use of the library, spending time there during the day and playing with the blocks and dinosaurs and checking out large stacks of books. We read just about every graphic novel in the children's section, a genre the library has been steadily growing, and even made a few suggestions of books the library might purchase—which they did!

Over the years, the library has served as an important resource for us for information, stories, and the wonderful community we find there. In middle school, it served as a safe place for the kids to go after school if I couldn't pick them up right away. For our teens, the library serves as a place to meet and study. You don't have to buy anything and can hang out as long as you need in the comfortable chairs.

—*Elise Giddings*
McCall Public Library
McCall

I Read about 100 Books a Year

WE HAVEN'T ALWAYS had a library near us in places we have lived in the past. That is not right! We need libraries. People need to read more and play with their “toys” less. There is so much you can learn from books. And if you don't know what would be a good book to read, the librarians are always happy to suggest books to you. We have a great library in Idaho Falls, Idaho. The librarians are kind and helpful. They know their patrons. They know you! They know their BOOKS!!

I read about 100 books a year including books on Libby (another resource offered at our library). I could not afford to buy all these books. But we can get them at our library. Thank you, Idaho Falls Public Library!

—*Cathy Johnson*
Idaho Falls Public Library
Idaho Falls

I Was Looking for Belonging

A FEW YEARS AGO, I was a young mom new to the area. Not knowing anyone in town, attending story time gave us the opportunity to meet families in the same phase of life.

While the library is a great place for books and other resources, it gave me a sense of community in a time where I was looking for belonging.

Years later, my kids are all avid readers who love the library not just for the books, but for the awesome programs offered free of charge!

I'm always amazed at the amount of love and work the librarians put in to give our community amazing resources. The library really does have something for everyone.

—*Erica Eaton*
Idaho Falls Public Library
Idaho Falls

It Made Us a Family of Readers

MY FIRST MEMORY of the Idaho Falls Public Library is a day in the summer of 1947. I had turned six years old in February and was old enough to get a library card. I started with first readers and picture books and went on to bigger and better things.

When I graduated from high school, I went to work for Argonne National Laboratory as a secretary at “the site.” What a terrific job that was and what fascinating people I met. One thing I learned was that most of them were readers and we made good use of the library. It was fun to talk stories and books with people at work. It was the

first time I had talked with someone outside my immediate family about what I was reading.

When I married, I inherited a family of boys. They not only used the school libraries but we made many trips to the Idaho Falls Public Library. We shared with each other and it made us a family of readers. Idaho Falls Public Library has always been in the lives of my family and me. At 82, I’m happy to say that I am still a reader and am proud to have been an EXTREME BOOK NERD since its inception.

—*Sharen Green Peterson*
Idaho Falls Public Library
Idaho Falls

What Idahoans Say about Their Libraries

“When our family arrives for story time, the warmth of the air and the librarian’s face give a reprieve from the freezing outdoors A hushed anticipation, punctuated with questions about the book the librarian is holding, indicates Story Time has started. We sip coffee and enjoy the respite, watching our little charges soak in the story. With a contented smile I think, ‘*This*. This is a community. This is a library. This is love.’ And I am grateful.”

—*Karista Bradley*, Craigmont Community Library

“A public library is more than a storehouse of books. It is a safe public indoor space where every citizen is welcome to chase dreams.”

—*Anthony Doerr*, Boise Public Library

“For Alby, for whom the entire world is brand new and unknown, the Library is a place where he gets to fill in his picture of the world and how it works, book by book.”

—*Amanda Moulton*, Hailey Public Library

“The gratitude of a soul, homebound, released to feel, to fly, to learn through the services provided by the Twin Falls Public Library is a worthy endeavor. Isn’t this what every community should have?”

—*Mary E. Mullen*, Twin Falls Public Library