

# Dispatch

**and Annual Report: 1 July 2023 - 30 June 2024**



We build  
stories.

The Community Library brings information, ideas, and individuals together to enhance the cultural life of the community. It is an independent, non-government library funded by private donations and revenue from the Gold Mine Thrift and Consign stores.

## Give & Support

There are many ways to support the work of The Community Library Association:

Donate  
Shop  
Volunteer



[www.comlib.org](http://www.comlib.org)



Jenny interviews author Judy Blume in the Library's Lecture Hall in July.

Lizzy, of course, led a life beyond my reading. More than once, she absconded from her cage and we'd find her scurrying across the hallway or looking down at us from the top of the refrigerator. My imagination of her adventures was fueled by my reading of *The Borrowers* by Mary Norton and *The Mouse and the Motorcycle* by Beverly Cleary. I could vividly imagine Lizzy having an alternate life in the wall between my sisters' room and mine.

In sixth grade, Ms. Chapman taught us poetic forms, from limericks to acrostics. When Lizzy died that year, I wrote a haiku; it mattered that I could give some shape, even just seventeen syllables, to my sadness.

Words, I had learned, can create both a cocoon and an escape hatch; they can spin wild dreams and hold tender memories. They can be our companions, warm in our hands, whirring with possibilities.

**Jenny Emery Davidson, Ph.D.**  
Executive Director

Dear Friends,

When I think of all the people who helped me become a reader – Mrs. Pack, Mrs. Reed, Judi, Mrs. Schreiner – I also think of Lizzy.

Her black eyes were not much bigger than the dots on the “i’s” in the books that I read, and I could hold her in the cup of one hand while the other turned the pages. She was a honey-colored long-haired hamster; a birthday gift when I turned eight; the first pet I could call my own; a constant companion to my reading.

Lizzy was part of the cocoon that reading created for me. I would fold myself into my pillows, perch a book on my bent knees, hold Lizzy softly in my hands, and settle into the wonder of words. At night, when Lizzy was in her cage alongside my bed, she'd run and run and run on her wheel while I read and read and read. The whirl of the wheel and the swish of the turning pages reminded me that I was not alone, even when the night was very dark.

# We

## Idaho Library of the Year:

# The Community Library!

On October 10, the Idaho Library Association awarded The Community Library the “Idaho Library of the Year” award for its work championing libraries around the state and celebrating the freedom to read!

114,161 Library visitors

17,905 Library cardholders



# A Place to Create

## Supporting New Work in a Setting Ernest Hemingway Loved and Lived

By Martha Williams  
Director of Programs and Education

**F**ive years ago, the dilapidated garage below the historic Ernest and Mary Hemingway House in Ketchum was transformed into a bright, modern apartment to house a new offering from The Community Library: a writer-in-residence program, unique in the American West.

Since then, more than fifty artists have spent time in the residence. From poets, novelists and filmmakers, to journalists, academics, musicians, and choreographers, residents come for several days or weeks to begin new projects, to craft and edit works in progress, or to feel the satisfaction of hitting "SUBMIT" from this special place. Sometimes new ideas emerge in the peaceful residency apartment



Martha oversees the Hemingway House writer-in-residence apartment.

## Herald from the Hemingway House

**"I didn't expect a dry spell after publishing *Solito*, but the Hemingway House has gifted me the inspiration I needed to replenish my creative well.**

**I am forever thankful for the time, space, and especially the community, who have reminded me of why I keep returning to the page—to create mirrors through which others can see their reflections." ~ Javier Zamora**

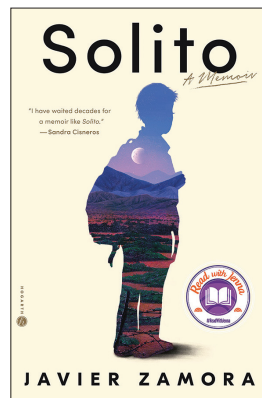
# imagine.

that looks out over a grassy lawn to the tops of cottonwoods along the Big Wood River.

No matter how long their stay, each artist also shares their time with our community, through free talks and workshops at the Library or through local school visits.

This past spring, the writer Javier Zamora (*Solito: A Memoir*) visited with 400 Spanish-speaking middle and high school students and discussed his childhood story of migration from El Salvador to the U.S. He answered their questions (serious and silly) and received their stories in return. Javier's residency, a partnership with the Sun Valley Writers' Conference, connected local students with a voice they could relate to—a voice that showed the power of telling your story and being a little less alone.

In August, we celebrated five years of the Writer-in-Residence program with supporters and partners. We were joined by another past resident, Craig Johnson (Longmire books and Netflix series), who shared how important time and space are to writers as they develop work. With the Hemingway House program, Central Idaho provides a home for their imaginations.



Javier signs books at Wood River Middle School in May.

PHOTO: BARBI REED

143,634 Items  
circulated

21 Residents at the  
Hemingway House

∞ Hemingway House  
inspiring moments



Aly (left) and DeAnn manage the Library's collections.

# How Does the Collection Grow?

**W**e add about 450 new books to The Community Library's collection every month! **Aly Wepplo**, collection manager, and **DeAnn Campbell**, director of the Children's and Young Adult Library, explain how it happens.

## There are a lot of books out there! How do you decide which ones to buy?

**ALY:** I look to library trade publications – I never miss *Booklist*, *Library Journal*, or *Kirkus*, and I consult reviews from *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *People Magazine*. And I receive a lot of requests from patrons! This combined input means our shelves hold something for everyone. We're building the Library's collection together.

**DEANN:** I am always looking for new books from popular authors and series, but I'm also looking for books to appeal to a wide range of interests and ages. I stay up to date on new releases and trends on #BookTok, social media, Netflix, and many other sources.

## How many books do you review each month?

**ALY:** I review at least a thousand books a month. I purchase one in every five or six books I review.

**DEANN:** I review 15-25 books for every book that is purchased for the Children's and Young Adult collections.

## How do you decide whether to buy a book as a hard copy, a digital copy, or an audio book?

**ALY:** I try to have all three. People have strong preferences when it comes to reading format! Many books are only available in hard copy - eBook and eAudio aren't always available. Personally, I prefer digital audiobooks, and I'll read anything from my favorite narrators.

**DEANN:** Kids and teens still really love to read physical books, and there is research that shows reading physical books is better for your brain and your memory – so I buy a lot of physical items. However, I also look for well-priced digital books and audiobooks, and I experiment with new formats, like Yoto players.

## Once a book is added to the collection, does it stay there forever?

**ALY:** No. We're constantly adding new books, and we have to make room for them! Books that haven't checked out in several years are passed on to Better World Books, an organization that donates or resells items to other libraries.

**DEANN:** We also remove books that are damaged or worn out.

## What are the most popular books in the Library's collection these days?

**ALY:** In fiction, our most popular authors include Lisa Jewell, Dennis Lehane, Kristin Hannah, and James McBride. In nonfiction, travel, cooking, health, and American history are the most popular.

**DEANN:** For kids and teens, graphic novels are all the rage. Old favorites are being rereleased in graphic novel form, and new books in this genre are exploding.

## What do you like most about collection management, and what is hardest about it?

**ALY:** The best part for me is hearing about what our patrons are reading! It makes me feel in-the-know and connected to the community. The hardest part is balance. I work hard to make sure there's variety on the shelves - variety in ideas, information, and points of view. We have a rich and diverse community, and our collection needs to reflect that.

**DEANN:** I love books, so it is fun to be able to shop for books and keep up with what is new and exciting. I love the challenge of trying to meet the needs of readers from the ages of 0 to 18 in a wide variety of genres. The hardest part is having to replace books that are lost or damaged, which cuts into our budget for new items.

## What if someone wants a book that the Library does not have?

**ALY and DEANN:** Request it! We can borrow the book from another library, or we might purchase it.

Talk to someone at the front desk or make the request online:

<https://comlib.org/request-an-item>

## MOST POPULAR TITLES

### Fiction

*The Women:* Kristin Hannah

### Nonfiction

*The Wager:* David Grann

### Children's

*Dog Man series:* Dav Pilkey

**“We're building the library's collection together.”**

**164** Times *The Great Gatsby* (Winter Read) circulated

**8,818** Titles added to the collection

**1,614** New library cards issued



# A Reader's Tale

## Bonnie Thibodo

By Pamela Parker

Director of Library Operations



In college, Bonnie was told to "Read anything. But read!" She dove into *Gone with the Wind* and has since become a lifelong reader.

On any given day, you might see Bonnie Thibodo walking in Ketchum— to the grocery, to the post office, to The Community Library.

Bonnie drops into the Library several times a week, usually with a broad smile, asking about what's available to read next. At 84, her sunny disposition occasionally includes an update about the tribulations of getting older. Just as often we hear about a recent trip—she's recently back from a solo journey to Scotland.

Her story begins in Los Angeles. "We had a concrete backyard," she recalls. Her parents were not readers, nor did they encourage her to go to college. It was an aunt – one of the first female reporters at *The Los Angeles Times* – who encouraged her.

As a freshman at San Diego State University, Bonnie needed to improve her reading speed and comprehension. She was advised to "Read anything. But read!" To do so, she determined to make reading a habit. Her first read was *Gone with the Wind*, which she picked simply because it was long and would give her lots of practice.

Now, decades later, Bonnie has become a lifelong reader and a regular member of The Community Library Book Club. "I love to read," she remarked.

**"I feel like it takes you away, takes you to places you will never be and challenges your mind."**

Bonnie became a physical therapist after working with a friend that had become quadriplegic. Her career was a successful one, and, upon retiring, at 55, she decided to come to Sun Valley, a place she'd fallen in love with over the years.

Bonnie admits to an occasional beach read (she sold a beach property to come here to the mountains). But she looks for challenging books as well. One of her favorite titles recently is *Lessons in Chemistry*, a hugely popular book about a female chemist during the 1960s. The character's experience parallels her own, she said.

It's with a lot of pride that Bonnie talks about her grandchildren, who live in the Wood River Valley as well. "My daughter has the kids at the Library all the time," she beamed. Bonnie's love for reading has become a family affair.

Fifty years after first visiting Ketchum, Bonnie maintains her good habits of reading and walking. Lucky for us, the Library is a regular stop.

# We grow.

167 Community Library Book Club members

562 Times *Lessons in Chemistry* circulated

130 Times *Gone with the Wind* circulated



The 2024 class of SVELS participants celebrates their learning in the Library's Lecture Hall.

# Reading Is on the Road!

On a cool early summer day in 2016, a big orange trailer rolled on to the fairgrounds in Carey. It carried books from The Community Library and bags of lunches from The Hunger Coalition. On the trailer were the words: "Bloom. Feed your body. Feed your mind."

Since its launch eight years ago, that trailer has logged thousands of miles as it has traveled between Carey, Bellevue, Hailey, and Ketchum during the summer months to keep kids reading, enjoying the fun of stories while also honing their literacy skills while school is out of session. More than 2,000 children have visited it, and they've checked out 12,731 books.

In 2025, The Community Library will launch a new bookmobile that will go farther and longer with even more books. The bookmobile will operate year-round, visiting daycares and after-school programs and traveling to new locations, such as Richfield and Shoshone—because with reading, we all can go places!

## Together with Teachers Helping Every Child to Read

At The Community Library, we want to do more than check out books. We want to grow a culture of literacy. We want every child in Idaho to be able to read.

For three years now, we have reached out to Idaho educators around this goal. We've invited teachers of kindergarten through third grade to convene at the Library for three days each June for the Sun Valley Early Literacy Summit (SVELS).

Teachers come from towns including Ketchum and Castleford, Fairfield and Shoshone, Hailey and Leadore, all bringing a range of experience with young students from diverse backgrounds. Together at the Summit, we delve deeply into the science of reading with national experts.

We discuss how reading happens in the brain as pathways get built to connect sounds to letters and words. We discuss what this means for different kinds of learners, from students who speak more than one language, to students with characteristics of dyslexia.

In three years, 121 teachers have participated in the Summit. Collectively, they reach thousands of Idaho students.

The teachers inspire us with stories from their classrooms and we provide resources for them to take back to their students.

One participant said, "My experience at the Sun Valley Early Literacy Summit was unbelievable. I learned new things to add to my teacher toolbox and help all of my students learn to read. I also have resources and information to take back to my school and administrators to help all students that attend our school."

Together, we're creating the conditions in which every Idaho child can experience the freedom that comes with reading.



# We

**51** Early Literacy Summit attendees

**3,575** Children's program participants

**950** Books circulated at Bloom Bookmobile



“The more that you read,  
the more things you will know.  
The more that you learn,  
the more places you’ll go.”

~Dr. Seuss

*I Can Read with My Eyes Shut*



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read.





Juan explores the “How in the World Did You Get to Sun Valley?” exhibit.

## Hispanic Heritage in the Wood River Valley

By **Juan Reyes**

2022 Wood River High School graduate  
2024 Programs and Communications intern  
Current University of Chicago student

In a fascinating corner of the “How in the World Did You Get to Sun Valley?” exhibit at the Wood River Museum of History and Culture, you can find Juan Salamanca’s serape, a wool sweater composed of vibrant colors: a sweater, worn by time but holding a story that reveals secrets from the past. This serape is not just a testament of history, but a window into the evolution of the social and cultural Hispanic heritage of Sun Valley.

The Hispanic influence in this picturesque region of Idaho dates back to the early 1900s when Latino workers began to arrive with only the clothes on their backs, in hopes of providing a better future for their families. Their labor was essential to the shaping of the Valley’s growth, from planting and harvesting to the development of modern-day local communities.

### Over time, these workers and their descendants have shaped the Valley’s vibrant identity.

Aside from the clothes they wore, they brought with them customs and traditions that are now reflected in the everyday life of the Wood River Valley.

Cultural institutions and schools of the Valley promote Hispanic history through events and educational programs, ensuring that the legacy of Hispanic culture is celebrated and preserved. From local businesses offering traditional foods to festivities like Trailing of the Sheep, Hispanic heritage remains an influential part of the Wood River Valley’s social life.

In this corner of Idaho, the legacy of Hispanic heritage continues to thrive, enriching the cultural and social landscape of our valley.

## How We Got Here...

### Wood River Museum Receives Award

Whether in the grocery checkout line or on the ski lift, a conversation with a new acquaintance often quickly turns to the question “How did you get here (in the middle of Idaho)?” The stories sparked by this simple question can be unexpected and profound, revealing the motivations and the happenstance that can shape a person’s journey.

This question provides the inspiration for one of the inaugural exhibits in the Library’s Wood River Museum of History and Culture, “How in the World Did You Get to Sun Valley?” This fall, the exhibit was honored with an award from



the Western Museums Association: the **2024 Charles Redd Center for Western Studies Award for Exhibition Excellence**. This award honors an exhibit that furthers the study and understanding of the North American West.

The “How in the World” exhibit presents the arrival stories of ten people who made their way to Central Idaho from different places at different points in time for different reasons, from the miner Al Griffith who arrived from Wisconsin in the late 19th century, to the elementary school teacher Juan Salamanca who arrived from Zacatecas in the late 20th century.

In the coming months, the featured individuals will change to illustrate the dynamic diversity of stories that have shaped this place. Together, the stories explore the ways this remote western community is in conversation with the larger world. It considers how a common question – *How did you get here?* – might offer a point of connection.

**830** Language class participants

**1,792** Museum program participants

**25,775** Museum visitors



# The Magic of Books

## From Ketchum to Dublin

**By Tess Burchmore**

2017 Community School graduate

2018 Hemingway Preservation intern

Current Ph.D. student at Trinity College Dublin

I still remember the magic of going to The Community Library as a child, without a specific book in mind, reading the words on spines and leaving with a stack of mysterious new books. Twenty years later, I have found that I can reclaim this magic as a library worker, holding curiosity about every book that crosses my desk.

My first job in libraries was as the Hemingway Preservation Intern at The Community Library. I had studied Hemingway in school, and cataloging the items around his house was full of wonder—his boots, his framed postcard of a Picasso sketch, Mary Welsh Hemingway’s clothes, his books.

After graduating from college, I decided to pursue my master’s degree in library science at University College Dublin. I swam in the historic swimming hole called the Forty-Foot just after I arrived in Dublin, the setting of the first episode of *Ulysses* by James Joyce.

I began work as a project assistant for the Old Library Restoration project at Trinity College. In preparation for building conservation, every book in the gorgeously historic Long Room had to be removed — we took each down, removed the dust with book-sized vacuums, conducted conservation interventions, updated the catalog records, and packed the books securely into boxes.

This project is a continuation of work that began in 1872, as the records we updated were simply digitized versions of this first catalog. Though the books are now off-campus, they are more accessible to researchers than ever due to our efforts.

I am now beginning my Ph.D. here at Trinity, studying the writings of the Irish author Flann O’Brien. The Hemingway Preservation Internship was my entry into the world of working in libraries, and the wonderful colleagues that I met in that position are a large part of what influenced me to pursue this career path.

I believe that libraries are a place where one can pursue both fun and knowledge, and I love my role in assisting others with their research and reading.



Tess holds a first edition of *Ulysses* at Trinity College.

# We reflect.

**“...I can reclaim this magic as a library worker, holding curiosity about every unknown book that crosses my desk.”**

**306** Kids and Teen Summer Reading participants

**12** Interns this year

**72** Interns since 2016



Ann enjoys a slice of family history.

# Grandmother's Recipes

## Preserving a Legacy One Dish at a Time

**By Ann Parry**  
Retired Math Teacher  
and "Lover of the Library"

In July my mom, Philinda Robinson (87), and I attended Cynthia Nims' workshop at The Community Library, "Preserving Family Recipes" (a partnership between the Library and the Sun Valley Culinary Institute). Tucked away on a shelf, we found Grandmother's recipe book, blew off the dust, and brought it with us to the workshop.

Inspired by the experience, I have been making some of my grandmother's recipes, looking into the history and asking my mom about the stories embedded in them. Here is one:

While living and raising their families in Twin Falls, Idaho (1925-1960), Bea Thoman was my grandmother's best

friend. They shared many interests, from playing bridge to holiday parties. Bea and my grandmother also shared an interest in painting. Together they painted scenes from our family's cabin out Warm Springs Road. We still have many of Grandmother's paintings and one of Bea's hangs in our living room today.

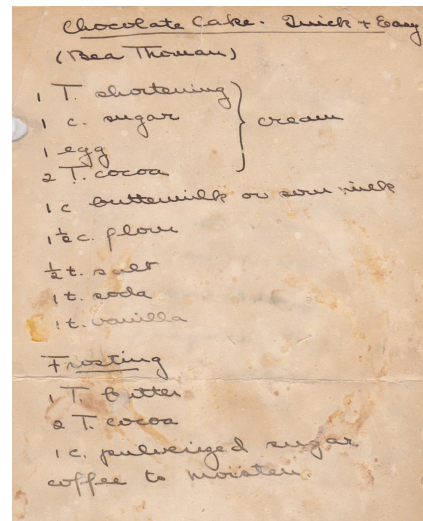
**Below is Bea's Quick-and-Easy Chocolate Cake recipe re-worked with extra chocolate.**

### Quick-and-Easy Chocolate Cake

- 1½ cups flour
- ¼ cup powdered Dutch cocoa
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- pinch of cayenne pepper
- 2 tablespoons butter (at room temperature)
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 cup chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.  
Grease and flour a square cake pan.

In a bowl, thoroughly mix dry ingredients. In a separate bowl cream together butter, sugar, egg, and vanilla. Mix in dry ingredients alternating with buttermilk. Mix in chocolate chips. Pour into greased cake pan (7" x 9") and bake for 30 minutes.



### For Icing, Mix Together:

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons powdered Dutch cocoa
- 1 tablespoon butter

Add coffee a teaspoon at a time until it reaches the desired consistency (3-4 teaspoons).

My grandmother wasn't much of a cook, but I love cooking. I seem to have a sense about what works, so I use recipes as an inspiration not a checklist.

**Editor's note:** I got to bake (and sample) this delicious recipe with Ann at her Warm Springs cabin – which has been in her family for over 100 years – along the river on a beautiful autumn day. Inspired by the workshop, Ann is compiling selections from her grandmother's recipe book, pairing each recipe with a family story and a photo, and giving the collection to her mother for Christmas this year.

~ Kyla Merwin, communications manager

# We connect.

77 Adult Programs

10,239 Program and class participants

817 Cookbooks in the Library's collection





Eighteen women prepare to break ground for the Library in 1956.



Thirty-plus staff keep the vision going in 2024.



## Shade, Sustenance, and Shelter

By Carter Hedberg  
Director of Philanthropy

I recently came across this Vietnamese proverb:  
**“When eating fruit, remember the one who planted the tree.”**

Your donation is much more than simply a financial contribution—it is the foundation for ongoing change. The 17 women who founded The Community Library as a privately-funded library nearly 70 years ago understood that their individual contributions would plant a tree for the future—just as your support does today. And just as trees provide shade, sustenance, and shelter for generations, your kindness and generosity will have a lasting impact on the many lives of those we serve.

I am grateful for your commitment to literacy, lifelong learning, and providing a safe, welcoming environment for all. Your generosity will continue to bear fruit for years to come...thank you for planting a tree!

### Income:

Donations	\$1,768,162
Gold Mine Net Contribution	\$926,285
Endowment Contribution	\$212,795
Stewardship Fund Contribution	\$124,897
Library Services	\$19,135
<b>Dedicated Tax Dollars</b>	<b>\$0!</b>

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Total Income **\$3,051,274**

Hemingway House Endowment Project **\$1,860,000**

### Expenses:

Library Operations and Programs	\$1,652,243
Outreach and Development	\$274,429
General and Administrative	\$1,124,602

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Total Expense **\$3,051,274**

Read the entire Dispatch and Annual Report online here >

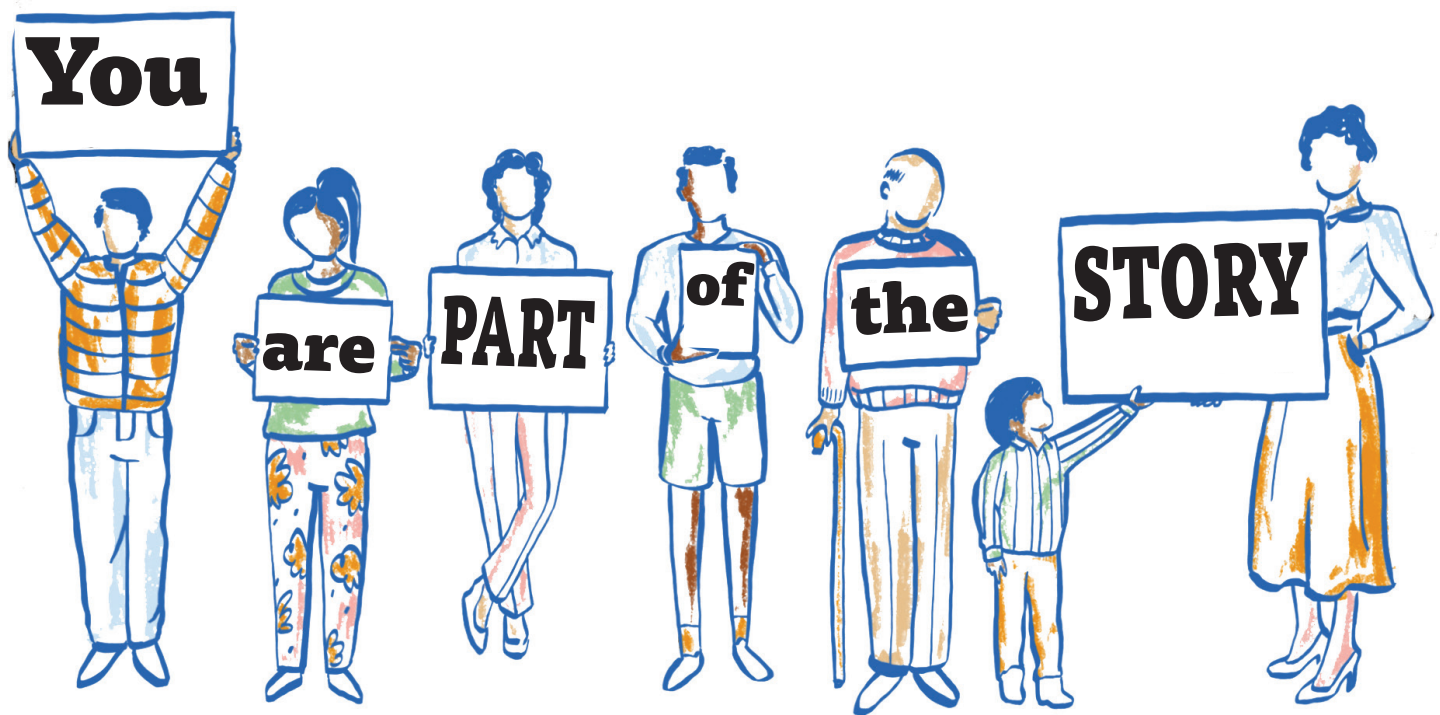


**219,564** Gold Mine Thrift and Consign shoppers purchased **264,991** items to help support books, literacy, and programs at The Community Library

# THE COMMUNITY LIBRARY



415 Spruce Avenue North  
PO Box 2168 • Ketchum, ID 83340  
www.comlib.org



## The Community Library

P.O. Box 2168  
415 Spruce Avenue North  
Ketchum, ID 83340  
bringit@comlib.org  
208.726.3493  
Mon, Fri, Sat: 10am-6pm  
Tu-Th: 10am-8pm

## Wood River Museum of History and Culture

580 Fourth Street East, Suite 130  
Ketchum, ID 83340  
regionalhistory@comlib.org  
208.726.8118  
Entry to the Museum is FREE  
Tue-Sat: 10am-6pm

## Gold Mine Thrift

331 Walnut Avenue  
Ketchum, ID 83340  
goldmine@comlib.org  
208.726.3465  
Mon-Sat: 10am-6pm

## Gold Mine Consign

Next to Gold Mine Thrift on Walnut  
580 4th Street East, Suite 120  
Ketchum, ID 83340  
gmconsign@comlib.org  
208.726.5544  
Tue-Sat: 10am-5:30pm

**On the Cover:** Rienza (9) built a Doodle Bot during Library Lab in the Children's Library.