

National Friends of Libraries Week

Creston, IA **October 17, 2020** -- The Gibson Memorial Library will be spending the week of October 18-24, 2020, celebrating its Friends of the Library group as part of the annual celebration of National Friends of Libraries Week.

The Friends of the Creston, Iowa Public Library was first mentioned in Library Board meeting minutes from March 1996, and it is from those minutes we can see the origins of the group. "A Friends of the Library group is in the making, (with then board member) Don Hall offering to assist in its beginnings," wrote 1996 Board secretary Kris Kerrigan. In June 1996, Kerrigan recorded that, "the Friends of the Library met to get acquainted and to discuss and develop their bylaws..." and they would meet again later in that month.

The Friends of the Library has donated a significant amount of money for the library to date to assist with programming and unforeseen expenses outside of the library's general budget including desks for the staff, chairs for patrons to use in the library and all unmet needs the library may have.

Currently, over 131 community members contribute annually to the Friends, and 15 of those members sit on the Friends of the Library Board.

The Friends of the Library Board actively volunteer their time to assist with the group toward fundraising efforts that include: the annual Cookie bouquets for Valentine's Day, Scholastic Book Fair on the 4th of July, and their used book sale held on Balloon Day's weekend in the fall. The Friends of the Library Board donates books every year to the local area preschools to ensure every child has a book at home.

"The library has always played such an important role in my life and in my family's life," said Friends President, Julie Schieffer. "I truly enjoy being able to give something back – and being an active member of this group is fun!"

Officers of the organization are:

- Julie Schieffer – President
- Judy Hoakison – Vice President
- Cynthia Blakely – Corresponding Secretary
- Kay Raymond – Recording Secretary
- Jan Dillinger – Treasurer
- Sarah King – Student Representative
- Caprial Norton – Student Representative

Celebration activities include special "Love letters" to the Friends by the library staff and patrons that will be posted throughout the library for all to view.

“Our library would be much poorer without the Friends,” said Library Director Aric Bishop. “I think most patrons would be surprised to learn how many of the services and programs they enjoy are supported by the Friends of the Library.”

Please contact the library at 641.782.2277 or visit the Library’s Facebook Page or the Library’s website at: www.creston.lib.ia.us to learn more about the week’s activities, and to find out how to become a member of the Friends.

National Friends of Libraries Week is coordinated by United for Libraries, a division of the American Library Association with approximately 4,000 personal and group members representing hundreds of thousands of library supporters. United for Libraries supports those who govern, promote, advocate, and fundraise for libraries, and brings together library trustees, advocates, friends, and foundations into a partnership that creates a powerful force for libraries in the 21st century. For more information, visit www.ala.org/united.

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