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Waukesha Public Library offers compassion kits for grief, anxiety following Christmas parade tragedy

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When you think of a library, row and rows of books are often what comes to mind. But it doesn't take much reading between the lines to realize libraries often offer so much more.



By: [Sarah McGrew](#)

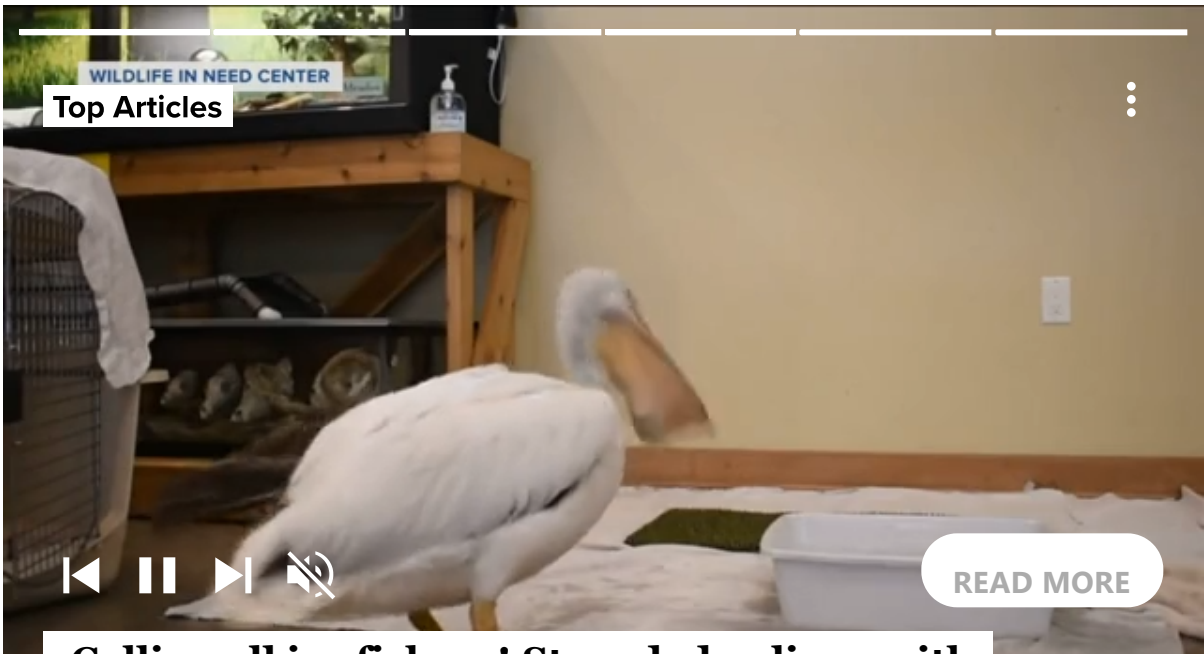
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WAUKESHA, Wisc. — When you think of a library, row and rows of books are often what comes to mind. But it doesn't take much reading between the lines to realize libraries often offer so much more.

That has been especially true of the Waukesha Public Library following the the horrific events at the Christmas parade tragedy.

"We were a safe haven for people afterwards," said Library Director Bruce Gay.

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He said library staff working that day were also deeply affected as they took in about 150 people in the hours following the parade.

More than a month later, the library is still finding way to support the community through the difficult time and emotions.

"It's important for us to connect with the community and find out what they need and give them that," Gay said.

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In collaboration with Healing Hearts of Southeast Wisconsin, the library created Compassion Kits. There are four different kits for different age groups, including preschool to second grade, third grade to sixth grade, a kit of teens and one for adults as well.

The kits are free and can be picked up from the library.

"There are really ways for all ages to reflect and try to find some peace in this time," Gay said.

In the third grade to sixth grade kit, there are lots of tactile activities, including bubbles which can help be a reminder to take deep breaths.

The adult kit includes things like adult coloring sheets and a list of books for dealing with grief. Each kit also comes with a list of mental health resources available in the community.

Gay said about 100 kits were made for each age group, and about 75% of the kits have already been picked up. He said more will be made to continue to meet the needs of the community.

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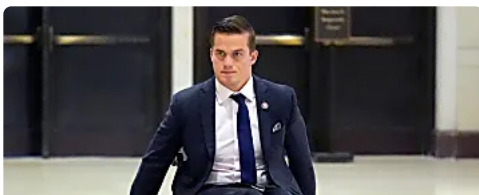
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