

Sharing love and appreciation for libraries

By Jill Fuller

A lot has changed in a month, hasn't it? While it's easy to focus on the negative that's taking place around the globe, I find myself drawn to the stories of love, kindness, and generosity that are also being shared in the news.

In the spirit of spreading good news, I thought I'd share some of the beautiful stories we've collected from the past year from community members who find solace and connection at their public libraries. I hope that reading these stories helps you think of the ways your library has positively affected your life as well.

Elizabeth lives with dementia and attends Library Memory Project memory cafes at several Waukesha County libraries with her daughter Marie. "We go to the memory cafes because we like them a lot," Marie said. "Mom does get bored, so I am thankful that we have places like this to go

to. I think it's good for her health to keep busy as well."

Matt brings his children, Hazel and Isaac, to the Waukesha Public Library for storytime, books and socialization.

"Hazel is three-and-a-half and she's already reading, so we were able to find all the materials we needed to get her started reading here. ... On Fridays, they have a playtime for two hours where kids can just come in and play with whatever toys they set out. It's nice because my kids don't go to daycare so this gives them an opportunity to socialize and interact with other kids and develop those skills."

Claire, a patron of Hartland Public Library, is an avid reader who depends on her public library.

"I created a reading challenge for myself to read 52 books in 2019. At the same time, I implemented a



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book-buying ban since I already have overflowing bookshelves, so it was the library to the rescue! Thanks to the interlibrary loan system, I was able to save hundreds of dollars while completing my challenge and reading the books on my list. I'm back at it in 2020 by reading 52 books."

Even during this quarantine, people are sharing what they love and miss about their library.

"I love that the Mukwonago and Eagle libraries have helped instill a love of learning and reading in our kids," Jamie wrote to us. "We absolutely adore our libraries and all the people who work there!" Tracy made us laugh when she commented, "Running out of books may be worse than running out of toilet paper or food!" And Charlotte wrote, "I love my (Waukesha Public) library! I don't know what I would do without it."

We are all missing many things about our daily, "normal" lives that we per-

haps once took for granted. If the library is something you've been missing, consider emailing me to share what you love and appreciate most about it so we can share it with others. Let's keep on spreading uplifting, positive stories to help us get through these difficult times!

And even though the libraries are closed right now, your library and library staffs are still here for you. Go to www.bridgeslibrarysystem.org/stuck-at-home-resources to find online library resources like digital books and magazines, streaming movies and TV, and online classes. You can also contact your library staff or the Bridges Library System with questions or concerns. Stay safe and stay healthy!

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