

Libraries offer many reasons to be thankful

Patrons share their gratitude stories

By Jill Fuller

As Thanksgiving approaches, I've been challenging myself to get creative about the things I'm thankful for. There are the obvious answers, of course: my family, friends, health, and home. But after a difficult and uncertain year, I want to try a little harder to pick out the small yet important things in my life that I often forget to be grateful for. Some of the items on my list so far include: the sound of the coffee maker in the morning, my favorite pair of socks, a new season of "The Crown" on Netflix, and doing puzzles with my son.

In honor of Thanksgiving, we asked public library patrons from Waukesha County why they're thankful for their library. The answers people sent us show that gratitude really is about the little things in life, like the thrill of finding a new

book series, the joy of a friendly chat with a librarian, and the fun of attending a trivia program.

Rosemarie told us that the Brookfield Public Library is a place of inspiration and comfort to her. "I can obtain inspiring and inspirational media on current event topics, as well as arts and cultural books and media to relax with," she said.

Meanwhile, Katie has been able to stay connected with her extended family virtually thanks to the New Berlin Public Library's Monday night trivia program.

"Because of health concerns, we've been staying away, so the opportunity to do something fun together, while apart, has been uplifting!" Katie said.

She's also been doing lots of reading with her little one. "Our kiddo has read almost 500 different library books, which has given us daily family quality time that other activities would not," she added.



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Tom is retired and enjoys seeing the library staff at the Oconomowoc Public Library when he visits. "They smile when they safely check my books out. I see it in their eyes and hear it in their voices. I know they are stressed, too, but they always care to ask how I'm doing."

Mathilde and her family have been visiting the Menomonee Falls Public Library almost daily since quarantine began.

"At any time, we have between 30 to 40 books checked out at home and LOVE exploring new stories, fiction and non-fiction alike. My sons' interests have opened up tremendously!"

The pandemic has been challenging, but patrons expressed gratitude for the creative solutions public libraries have offered them. Julie told us her family is thankful for the Mukwonago Community Library, writing, "They have gone above and beyond under the circumstances of COVID-19 and have put forth an excellent effort to assist families. A couple of examples are providing take-N-make kits for children and adults, monthly

book challenges, and care book packages."

Cheryl expressed appreciation for the ebooks, digital streaming movies, and curbside pickup service her library offers. "The Delafield library has been my LIGHT during these trying months," she wrote. "I had safe access to books, audiobooks, AND movies, which meant I never went hungry for entertainment, knowledge, or cheering up. Thank you so much for being there for me and the community."

We are grateful to everyone who shared their stories with us; it means so much to hear from you. Every Thursday, we will continue to post stories like these on the Bridges Library System's social media accounts for our "Thankful Thursdays" series during November and December. Like us on Facebook or Instagram to see new ones each week. Thank YOU!

(Jill Fuller is the coordinator of marketing & communications for the Bridges Library System. She can be reached at jfuller@bridgeslibrarysystem.org.)