

GARDEN CITY LIBRARY FOUNDATION HERALD

2021 BASH FOR BOOKS

We have just a few tickets left for the Garden City Public Library Foundation's Annual **Bash for Books** on June 26. If you are unable to attend but would like to support our library with a donation, please visit: www.gardencitypubliclibraryfoundation.wildapricot.org.

Thank you to our generous Bash sponsors:

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GARDEN CITY
PUBLIC **LIBRARY**
FOUNDATION

BOARD MEMBER REQUEST

Would you like to contribute to your community, meet some wonderful people, and have fun in the process? If so, please consider joining the GCPL Foundation Board. For an application form, please email us at gcpl.foundation@gmail.com
subject: Board Application



ON THE ROAD AGAIN!

One of the programs that the Garden City Public Library Foundation is proud to support is Bells for Books, which brings books, educational activities and snacks directly to children who are unlikely to be able to go to the library. After almost fifteen months of sitting idle, the Bells for Books bus took to the road again on June 1st. Although the arrival of the bus isn't signaled by actual bells like it was when the program first began in 1994, excitement still rings through the air as Garden City's children clamber aboard the bright blue bus once again.

Bells' new coordinator Kim and assistant Rebecca agree that, "working with the kids" is the best aspect of their new jobs. The bus offers collections of books primarily for children and young adults, although a few adult titles are also available. In addition to driving the bus to 23 different stops around Garden City each week, Kim and Rebecca help children select books, sign them up for the Summer Reading Program, conduct scavenger hunts, teach skills like origami, and provide snacks and water at each stop. Kim is an elementary school librarian, and Rebecca also has library experience, but bringing books directly to their patrons is a new experience for both of them. They are struck by how appreciative the community is. One parent commented how excited she was to bring her child because she had loved the Bells bus when she had been a child. Apparently Bells for Books' popularity now spans generations.

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The latest news and updates from your favorite library foundation

ON THE ROAD AGAIN CONTINUED

Kim and Rebecca also distribute STEM kits that have been prepared by library staff member Rachel. Each week children can explore a new aspect of science, technology, engineering and/or mathematics through hands-on activities that promote problem-solving skills and expand children's knowledge of STEM concepts and professions. The kits contain materials for the activities and a handout with learning objectives, background knowledge and instructions. This week's kit challenges children to use the same process engineers use to build the tallest freestanding castle they can from marshmallows and toothpicks.

GCPL staff member Amanda oversees the book collections, enrichment activities, and mechanical operations of the Bells program and also coordinated the complex and multifaceted task of getting the bus back up and running. A new generator was installed while the bus was idle, but a number of smaller mechanical issues had to be resolved and a regular maintenance schedule established. The book collection needed to be updated with more current popular titles, and Kim and Rebecca had to learn to drive the bus, a process hampered by a temporarily broken back-up camera. Because Garden City has grown and changed since March 2020, Amanda says that the biggest challenge has been finding children with the greatest need for the bus. She and her staff have been doing everything from sending information about Bells for Books with utility bills to driving around Garden City looking for children. But as summer is progressing more and more children are finding the bus on their own, and the word about nice people, great books, entertaining activities, and free snacks tends to spread pretty quickly among children looking for some summer fun.



OUR "NOT A QUIET LIBRARY" IS OFFICIALLY NOT QUIET AGAIN



On May 17 the Garden City Public Library announced that it would fully open after over a year of being completely or partially closed to its patrons. The announcement was a welcome signal that the library services and programs had returned, but in reality, the library had maintained them in re imagined forms throughout the pandemic. Opening the building back for patrons has been a gradual process, but the difference between being partially open and fully open is loud and clear as children return to programs inside the library. Debbi and Shaina at the front desk love hearing the sound of "little voices" once again and are enjoying getting to know their patrons.

Around the library patrons are resuming their favorite activities. One young adult is playing a game on a computer, a woman with books spread all over her table is tucked away in a quiet corner as she works on a project, and two children are scouring the shelves for new books. When asked what they had missed most about coming to the library last year, they agreed that choosing their books was much more fun in person. Apparently many children, teens and adults agree with this assessment because they are signing up for the Summer Reading Program in droves.

Some of the operational changes made during the pandemic will remain intact. Patrons will still be able to access curbside pickup, and although in-person programming will definitely be the norm, the library will continue to offer a few online options primarily for adults.

There's no doubt, however, that the "not a quiet library" is finally able to live up to its name again.