friends of the Coralville Public Library

Fall 2026 Newsletter

Officers and Board Members

Bill Benson, President
Lee Ann Logan, Vice President
Margaret Mellecker, Secretary and Community Outreach
Pat Darling, Treasurer
Deb Gill, Book Sales
Kristine Roggentien, Publicity
Han Hauck, Archivist
Devan Kaduce, Member at Large
Shirley Altenhofen, Member at Large
Sara Jane Pitcher, Library Liason

From the Friends President

It is football season, and the Hawkeyes look great. (This was written before the Michigan game.) Did you know we usually have some wonderful books about the Hawkeyes at our November sale? Because of our volunteers' hard work, we have books sorted so you can easily locate what you are looking for.

The Friends' room is divided into numerous sections and categories. Volunteers come three days a week to sort books. The miscellaneous section used to be gigantic!!!! Now each donated book usually has a specific place to go, and our sales have increased. We set another record at the May sale at just a shade under **$10,000**. If we had an actual count, we estimate we sold over **15,000 books**. Those of you who have been Friends for a long time remember when $2500 was considered a great sale. Thanks to all of you for the increased support.

The Friends each year get a wish list from the library. The biggest part of the list is our ⅓ partnership in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. This program provides a free book every month to children from ages 0 to 5 years old. Just think … a child gets a book mailed to their house 60 times. We share that cost with the Foundation and the library.

Another major item that we fund is an intern for the summer. See our infographic on the last page that details all the support we provide to library, schools, and community. We are so blessed with a community that supports literacy the way Coralville does.

As a board, we have tackled (football reference) some projects related to governance. We have approved a revised set of by-laws, and we are currently working on updating our job descriptions. We reduced the number of at-large board members to coincide with the Foundation and Trustees. Many thanks to Marie Wakeman, Wendy Gasby, and Linda Cretzmeyer for their service and contributions over the past years.

We're looking forward to our next sale coming up on November 5 to 7. Watch for the email looking for volunteers to help with this event.

—Bill Benson



Next book sale: November 5–7, 2026

Friends' members early access:

- Thursday, November 5, 5:00 to 6:30 p.m.

General public:

- Friday, November 6, 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- Saturday, November 7, 10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Where: Coralville Public Library lower level

From the Library Director

September 30, 2026

Dear Friends,

We had wonderful participation in our summer reading programs again this summer. Thank you so much for your generous support of all of the programs! After such a busy summer, we usually feel a bit of a lull in August, but that did not seem to be the case this year. August was a full month, and before we knew it we were welcoming hundreds of new library users in September during National Library Card Sign-up Month. This year's theme was "A Library Card hits all the right notes" and to celebrate, we had several pop up music events in the Library rotunda. It is always an unexpected joy to encounter music in the Library ~ we received so many positive comments about it. We're already trying to think of ways to host music events more often!

October is here, and the **Paul Engle Prize event** at CPL will be on **Sunday, October 18, at 2:00 p.m.** The Paul Engle Prize, awarded by the Iowa City UNESCO City of Literature, is made possible through the generous support of the City of Coralville and is held annually at CPL. This year's recipient is Christopher Merrill, former director of the International Writers' Program. He will be in conversation with Loren Glass, chair of the UI English department. I hope you can attend the event as well as the reception afterwards, held in the Library rotunda and sponsored by the CPL Foundation. The event is free and everyone is welcome!!

In other Library news, landscape plans are in the works for the Library lawn. You may recall that a preliminary step in this process was the restoration and relocation of the Library's bear sculpture, Mishka, outside the south windows. In the coming months, we hope to share plans with you for some significant upgrades and enhancements that will make the lawn much more accessible and comfortable for Library events as well as the community's everyday use. Stay tuned!

Thanks again for all that you do!!

Alison Ames Galstad
Library Director

Teen Services Intern Spotlight: Eva Ortega Lopez



This summer, the Coralville Public Library welcomed Eva Ortega Lopez as its new teen intern—a position made possible by the Friends of the Library.

Eva is no stranger to the building. She first began volunteering the summer after eighth grade, shelving books and helping with children's programs, before Karen Stierler, teen services librarian, invited her to join the Teen Advisory Board. When the previous teen intern graduated, Eva asked about stepping into the role.

As teen intern, Eva runs the teen program's social media, designs and posts flyers in the building, assists with children's programs, and travels to the Coralville Food Pantry each Thursday for the free lunch outreach. (She even has a photo of herself at the pantry, holding a snake.)



This fall, Eva is at the University of Iowa to study secondary music education, with plans to become a high school choir director.

For Karen, the partnership has been a gift. "It has been the best summer," she said. "She's so good with the kids—making a 6th grader or a 10th grader feel welcome when they don't know anybody. I could not have done it without her." Teen program attendance is up roughly 200 this summer, reaching about 680 participants.

For Eva, the joy is in the relationships. "When we're at programs, it's getting to know these kids—seeing them go from being a bit shy and reserved at the beginning of the summer, to coming to three programs now, all so happy and learning all these new skills. That's just amazing," she said.

The internship has changed her, too. "I feel like a different person, honestly. I had very low self-esteem before I started," Eva said. **"Having this job really showed me that I'm a lot more capable than I thought."**

Eva plans to return each summer through graduation. And she's very grateful: "I'm just so thankful for the Friends, for giving me this opportunity. Funding this position has been absolutely amazing."



Banned Book Highlight: 'Juliet Takes a Breath'



Book bans appear in news headlines with depressing regularity these days, and sadly our community is not immune to the effects of recent state legislation. As of this writing, there are 160 books banned from the school libraries in the Iowa City Community School District due to Senate File 496. As a naturally curious reader, I have turned my attention to this list to see for myself just what is it about these books that the state deems inappropriate. Books such as *Juliet Takes a Breath* by Gabby Rivera.

Juliet Takes a Breath is a young adult novel about a Latina from the Bronx who comes out to her family on the same day she leaves for Portland to intern for a famous feminist author. This author's book was the catalyst of Juliet's feminist awakening during her freshman year of college and crucial to Juliet's newfound sense of self. Over the course of the summer Juliet experiences just how different Portland is from the Bronx (imagine an episode of Portlandia but less zany) while her understanding of feminism, queerness, relationships, and personal identity go through some radical changes. This is a book that challenges mainstream feminism and demonstrates the essentialness of intersectionality within our feminist and LGBTQ+ communities. It dares to ask the question plaguing the feminist movement for decades: "How can anything as huge of feminism be universal?" while providing the solution that "womanhood is radical enough for anyone who dares to claim it."

The only way to push back against book bans is to get informed. I encourage all in our community to go to the public library, check out a banned book, and start a conversation with a librarian. Get curious about why the state is taking books like *Juliet Takes a Breath* away from students in this school district. Be like Juliet and dare to ask, "Why?"

—Devan Kaduce

Children's Services



Dear Friends of the Coralville Public Library,

Thank you for all that you do for Children's Services. Your dedication to supporting the library and serving the community of Coralville is inspiring!

We had a great summer: 1,065 children signed up to participate in "Plant a Seed, Read!" Thank you, as always, for being so generous with book donations. Children and caregivers love receiving a book for a halfway reward; 457 books went home with young readers this summer! Funding from the Friends also allowed us to offer prize drawings which help encourage children to complete the reading challenge. This year we offered garden-themed educational toys, a tiny food truck kit, movie theater gift cards, and bookstore gift certificates.

Thank you for continuing to fund special guest visits during the summer. These events bring in hundreds of children and families, helping to build a sense of community and create lasting memories. On June 8, more than 190 people enjoyed a magic show with Mikayla Oz. We were thrilled to offer two pollinator programs—more than 100 people learned all about "Incredible Bats" on June 10, and nearly 200 people moved through the Butterfly Encounter tents on June 24. Thanks to our fabulous volunteers who helped set up the tents and wrangle the butterflies, this event went smoothly. On June 16, we welcomed Barnyard Discoveries back to the library—292 visitors walked through the mobile petting zoo and interacted with goats, sheep, a miniature horse, and more. Carole Stephens of Macaroni Soup returned with "snowballs" in tow on June 30 and put on an engaging musical show for 95 preschoolers and caregivers. Thanks again for helping us offer these unique experiences to our community.

There are 570 children currently enrolled in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Coralville. Thank you for your ongoing support of this program! We have served a total of 1,075 children since launching in February 2022. To date, children in Coralville and rural Johnson County have received 23,363 books. We are so proud to be able to offer this incredible program to our community—thank you for helping make it possible!

Sincerely,
Sara Glenn and Erika Binegar







Teen Services

Dear Friends of the Coralville Public Library,

On behalf of the teens who bring so much life to our library every day, thank you for your continued support and generosity!

This summer's reading program, "Plant a Seed, Read!," was a fantastic success, with over 450 teens participating and countless books being read. Thanks to your funding, we were able to bring in guest presenters, provide essential programming supplies, quality prize books, and exciting prize baskets for our Grand Prize Drawings, and offer snacks. Our TAB members loved their t-shirts they designed and wore them proudly to all our events.

A major highlight this year was hiring former TAB member Eva Ortega Lopez as our teen intern. Eva brought incredible energy to the library, helping at all events, designing flyers, managing our social media, and making all of our teens feeling welcome and supported.

We are also deeply grateful for the Friends Teen Service Award. This year's $1,000 scholarship went to Shahd Suleiman, a dedicated high school senior who is now pursuing her studies at the University of Iowa.

Your generosity nurtures creativity, confidence, and community in our youth. Thank you for investing in Coralville's teens and making CPL a place where they can truly thrive.

With sincere appreciation,

Karen Stierler









Adult Services

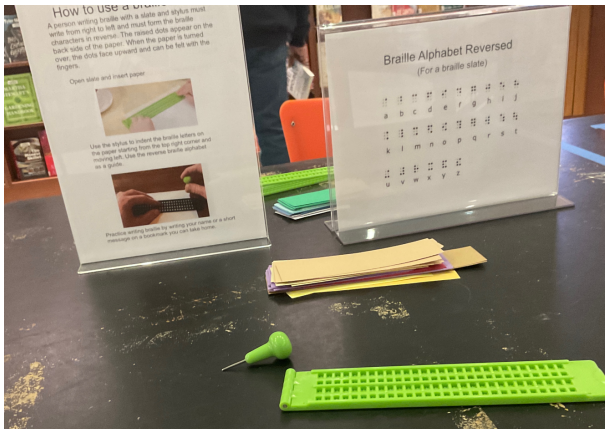
Thank you, Friends for supporting the Adult Summer Reading Challenge! We had 758 community members sign up for the Challenge and 525 complete. That's a 70% completion rate! Because of the Friends generosity we were able to give everyone who completed a book and an entry into our prize drawing. We don't use Library funds for prizes, it's thanks to the Friends and local businesses that we are able to reward readers that complete the challenge.

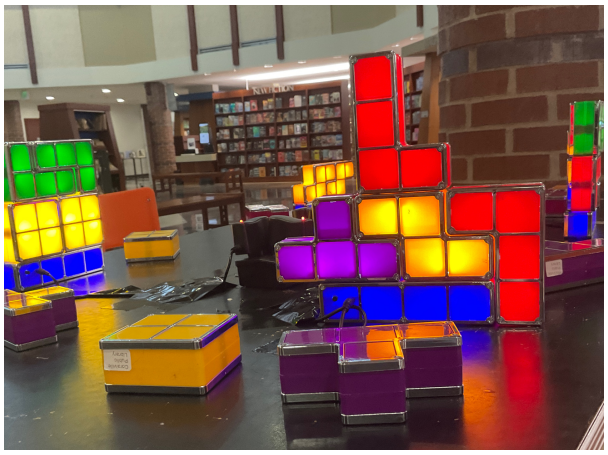
Have you visited the Annie Gill Craft Table in the Library's Rotunda? This table has rotating interactive activities designed for all ages. There is always something to do and see. The Craft Table is supported by the Friends. Thank you for all you give to make visiting the Library extra special.

Soon we will begin wrapping books for Blind Date with a Cookbook, where we challenge community members to make a recipe from a free brown-paper-wrapped cookbook. We will be starting earlier this year in mid-December to give people the opportunity to take the challenge during the holiday break. We received 20 video submissions last year and hope the change will encourage more people to make a video of the challenge for a chance to win a $100 Co-op gift card. Everyone is welcome to take a free surprise cookbook provided by the Friends of the Coralville Public Library. We gave away 323 cookbooks last year, and are preparing to beat that number this year.

—Sara Jane Pitcher









Volunteer Opportunities

Do you want to be more involved with the Friends? We are creating committees to support our Board of Directors. Current committees are:

- **Public Relations:** Includes social media, graphic design, and public outreach at local events
- **Book Sales:** Advises and assists with book sales and preparation
- **Membership:** Keeps in contact with new member acknowledgment, dues reminders, and planning member-only activities

Meetings will be approximately one hour per month with a report at the monthly board meeting. Tasks will be assigned at the meetings.

Contact friendsofcoralvillePL@gmail.com for more information.

Book Sale Dates

- November 5–7, 2026
- February 4–6, 2027
- April 29 – May 1, 2027
- August 5–7, 2027
- November 4–6, 2027

Friends' members early access: Thursdays, 5:00 to 6:30 p.m.

General public:

- Fridays, 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Don't forget to donate your gently used books, media, games, and framed art at the circulation desk any time of year!

Membership and Dues

Friends' dues follow the calendar year. New members are welcome and appreciated anytime, but memberships come due with the new year ($20 per year).

Update your membership online at CoralvillePublicLibrary.org/Friends.

The Friends of the Coralville Public Library newsletter is published twice a year in the spring and fall.



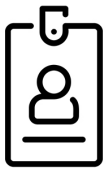
friends of the Coralville Public Library

Gave $26,481 in 2025



Teen Service Award
$1,000

Given to a local senior who volunteered 50+ hours



Teen Services Internship
$3,000

Given for internship at the library



Local Schools
$6,000

Given for books and literary activities



Stay Sharp Kits
$1,500

For 11 memory activity kits available for check-out



Kids Book Giveaways
$1,000

Given to purchase new books for kids during the holidays



Library Program Prizes and Activities
$7,981

At the Coralville Public Library



Dolly Parton Imagination Library
$6,000

Mailed 6,028 books to Coralville children under 5



Books Given
8,054

To local school classrooms, local events, prisons, and Little Free Libraries

Membership



184 members

1,176 volunteer hours

Funds Raised



$4,313 from membership

$25,611 from four book sales