

Graham County November 2016 Report

Celebrating a Library Centennial

On September 22nd the Safford Library formally celebrated 100 years of service to the community. The day was filled with activities including preschool and toddler birthday parties, party favors for children to make, a Library Queen photobooth and games for the whole family. The ceremony itself included speeches from Safford Mayor Chris Gibbs, the President of the Friends of the Safford Library, Safford Library Advisory Board Chair and one of our most generous individual donors. The highlight of the event was the Safford High School drumline which marched through the stacks and performed inside the library.

The day-long celebration was a culmination of a month of activity that will have a long-term positive impact on the library. These actions included:

- Tremendous positive public relations demonstrated in a Proclamation for Safford Library Centennial Week and numerous newspaper articles including two front page articles.
- A wish list for birthday presents that ran in the local newspaper and Friends newsletter led to numerous small and large donations from crayons and pencils to telescopes and a Silhouette machine.
- The "100 inches" book donation drive that led to more than 150" of requested books that were added to the permanent collection

One of the favorite parts of the celebration for the community was a timeline of the library's history marking its long and storied life including its five different locations. We hope that the timeline and the entire celebration emphasized the importance of this living and growing institution.



Responding to Natural Disaster

The night of October 8th, Safford received an unprecedented amount of hail. In fact, the hail was measured at 5-6" of water in just 3 hours. Hundreds of homes and cars were damaged. Local schools were suddenly closed for two weeks in response to severe building damage. Many displaced students turned to the library for a safe haven during the day. The library

responded with new programs for Safford students including movie screenings, extra Lego Club programs and a special open ScienceCity program with the U.S Forest Service. In addition to accommodating students, the library became the alternate location for community meetings that had to be relocated from damaged city and county buildings.

Strengthening Efforts with Area Schools

On August 9th, the library closed early so that the staff could be at Safford's three elementary schools. It was "Meet the Teacher Night" with parents and students getting their first chance to meet their new teachers and sign-up for school services such as the cafeteria or bus service. With the support of each principal, two library staff members or volunteers were at each school to help sign up interested families for library cards and share with them library services that can help their child succeed in school. In just 2 hours, 52 children were signed up for library cards. This was first time the library tried this type of outreach, but we plan to make it an annual event. The library also held its own Back to School open house in early September.



In addition to these outreach events, the library provides training directly to teachers on its valuable online resources. This school year, we have already conducted inservice training for all the teachers at the area's charter schools as well as an NAU elementary education class, Head Start staff members and SUSD Title 1 teachers. Our hope is to provide training to all SUSD elementary school teachers by the end of the year.

Using Dinosaurs to Share Early Literacy Skills

On October 19th, five hundred people came to enjoy the annual Dinosaur Day event. Dinosaur Day is a drop-in event where preschoolers and their grown-ups can engage in a variety of learning stations. Stomp like a Dinosaur and Dig for Dinosaur Eggs are two of the favorite stations. The event is hosted jointly by the Safford Library and Eastern Arizona College's Early Childhood Education Department. The Safford Library provides the location, advertising and some of the activities while EAC provide games and college students to man the event. It has become a long standing annual tradition that provides hands-on learning for preschoolers while giving hands-on practice to future Early Literacy educators. The program has been so successful that we are contributing our experience in bringing a modified version to neighboring Greenlee County.

Building a Relationship with the Lions Club

The Lions Club and Safford Library are finding areas of common interest and support. For example, in early October the library hosted the Lions to provide free vision screenings during Toddler Time. The screening was extended to the general public with more than 80 people participating. Because of the response, the Lions have asked to come once a quarter to provide the free service. In addition, the Lions are donated more than \$5,000 to purchase an AutoScan microfilm reader enabling patrons to email, print or save materials onto a jump drive. This will replace the aging and dilapidated Minolta reader the library currently owns.