

Annual meeting serves up fresh feast...and financial reality check

No one left this year's annual Friends of the Library meeting hungry. Those seeking culinary inspiration and new know-how left full, as did those simply seeking a delicious meal. And all this thanks to the long hours of planning by coordinator Kris McGuire and a generous donation of time, energy and expertise by celebrity chef Suzanne Landry.

The May 31 luncheon filled nearly 100 seats in the Carpinteria Community Church, whose kitchen and meeting room were generously lent to the Friends for the event and all the prep work leading up to it.

Using a basket bursting with veggies, a few knives and a cutting board, Suzanne imparted scores of cooking tips and taught a rapt audience about how to eat healthily without sacrificing taste. Her many years as a chef, food educator and cookbook author informed a flavorful presentation.

The food that followed reinforced Suzanne's message that delicious and healthy can occupy the same plate. Attendees enjoyed roasted veggie quesadillas and Suzanne's famous quinoa salad, a meal prepared under the chef's supervision by Friends boardmembers and volunteers Linda Zimmerman, Jean Bailard, Gaby Edwards, Louise Moore, Giti White, Nola Nicklin and Kris McGuire.

Three lucky raffle winners were announced at the luncheon, and prizes of two juicers, an iPad mini and a meal for four prepared by Suzanne were awarded. The raffle raised \$3,000 for the library's summer reading program.

And then there was the business side of the meeting. Friends Board Chair Jean Bailard gave the group an overview of the organization's accomplishments over the past year, as well as the challenges the library is facing.

The bookstore remains very successful, thanks to its volunteer manager April Ueoka and all of the store volunteers. The price increase on books during 2013 brought fundraising by the store up to \$60,000 and enabled the Friends to provide \$48,000 to cover library operating expenses and an additional \$5,000 for children's performances, \$2,500 for purchase of new children's books, and \$2,100 for the Reading is Fundamental program, through which new books are given to 300 Carpinteria second- and third-graders three times a year.

Another feather in the Friends cap last year was the renovation of the library community room, a \$24,000 project led by Kris McGuire that was almost fully funded with donations and grants.

Membership for Friends of the Library has dwindled this year to 200, a significant drop from the 372 members of the organization during the 2011 "Save our Library" campaign. One of this year's goals is to bring in new and returning members, whose dues are a critical component of annual fundraising.



As the Friends board and volunteers work diligently to raise new funds, the shortfalls in library funding continue to grow. Jean told the annual meeting audience that the library is looking at a deficit of \$17,336 for 2014-15. Since her report, the City of Carpinteria accepted a matching grant challenge by Friends to increase its planned contribution of \$27,000. Both friends and the City contributed an additional \$8,700 to cover the deficit.

For fiscal year 2014-2015, the Friends' contribution to the library is \$56,700, approximately 24% of its operating budget. The county contributes 45%, and the City now contributes approximately 15%.



HOW TO MAKE EVERY CHILD A READER

BY MELINDA WITTEWER

Where can you take young children every week that is not expensive, not far away, and not boring? Of course this eliminates Disneyland, the Swiss Alps, and solitary confinement. This special place offers fascinating options and activities, is open almost every day, and is a sure-fire way to expand a child's imagination and knowledge. I'm sure that all of you have guessed by now that the answer is . . . your local library.

My love affair with books began on my mother's lap. It didn't really matter which story she read to me. I just loved being cuddled while she spun each tale, each character into visions that became almost real to me. We didn't own a large collection of books, but we made almost weekly trips to our small town library, one of my favorite places.

It is well known that reading to children, even infants, is a great way to teach language, not only the meaning of words but also the rhythm of conversation. Reading exposes children to new experiences and stretches their imaginations. As your child grows, the stories become longer and more complex, thus helping to develop concentration. Children also begin learning the basics of how to read such as distinguishing text from pictures, eye movement from left to right, and recognizing letter shapes and sounds. Perhaps the most important thing to me was that I enjoyed the whole process - both as a child being read to and an adult doing the reading. Sharing a book allows time for bonding, discussing ideas, and experiencing emotions in a safe environment.

We know reading is good, but the big question becomes what to read to these very young beings. After three sons and two grandsons, I certainly have my favorite books, and I am more than happy to share these titles with you. I must admit I usually like books with vibrant illustrations and stories that rhyme. For this you start with the master—Dr. Seuss. His ABC book is perhaps the best alphabet book ever written. And "Wocket in my Pocket" allows you to read the same book over and over and not get bored. It also allows a very young child to start filling in the words, if the adult reader pauses at just the right time. Continuing with another illustrator and author, look up Mercer Mayer and the Little Critter books—always fun and usually with a moral attached.

Don and Audrey Wood (I call these the Wood-Wood books) have created some of the most wondrous children's books ever: "The Napping House," "The Red Ripe Strawberry . . .," "Quick as a Cricket," "Silly Sally," "Piggies," and more. I don't adore all of Sandra Boynton's books but "Snuggle Puppy" and "Pajama Time" are quite fun. In fact these can be sung as they have a catchy rhythm and words that make you smile. Also most Boynton books are board books so stand up to much handling by small fingers. I can't talk about books for the youngest readers without mentioning "Where the Wild Things Are" by Maurice Sendak and "Peter Rabbit" by Beatrix Potter. "The Country Bunny" by DuBose Heyward is a book from my childhood that I adored—great story and great pictures. These books are so well known that they are must-haves for all libraries. For a list of other great books for kids go to teachersfirst.com/100books or the California Young Reader Medal (CYRM) site.

Before Curious Cup Bookstore in Carpinteria closed its doors, the owner suggested "Little Blue Truck" by Alice Schertle. This book is a hit with all ages (including adults), both male and female, and even teaches the value of friendship. Another find at the Curious Cup was "Jamberry" by Bruce Degen—a glorious trip to a jam jamboree. Three book series that always entertain are the Snowmen books by Caralyn Buehner, the Sheep books by Nancy Shaw, and If You Give a ... books by Laura Numeroff.

My favorite new books are "To Market, To Market" by Anne Miranda which is so much fun I still enjoy it after reading it at least 200 times and counting. The "Pout-Pout Fish" by Deborah Diesen takes you underwater, spins you around, shakes you up, and makes you grin. If you like syncopation, try "Jazz Baby" by Lisa Wheeler and R. Gregory Christie. This is more a musical experience than just a book. But my grandsons' favorite is "Wolf's Coming" by Joe Kulka." This is a little scary with lots of animals and a surprise ending you can't help but like.

The truth is I read books I love, but I do sometimes get roped into reading whatever my grandsons love even if it involves Batman. And if you ask any preschool teacher or librarian or bookstore owner, he or she will each have their own list of favorite kids' books. Check out the Carpinteria Library's impressive assortment of great choices, but if you do run out of book selections, consider this. Next time you want to buy books as a gift for any children or grandchildren, do so. Read these books together at least 10 times, then donate them to our library, 5141 Carpinteria Ave. It's a great way to enrich your life and someone else's.

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