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Contact: DPI Media Line, (608) 266-3559, media.inquiries@dpi.wi.gov

Public libraries empower students, schools, communities

An op-ed by Assistant State Superintendent for the Division for Libraries and Technology Dr. Darrell Williams

As we recognize [National Library Week](#), communities across the nation have a unique opportunity to reflect on the invaluable role our libraries have in fostering literacy across all ages while also expressing heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated librarians who make it all possible.

In an era marked by rapid technological advancements, our libraries remain steadfast in their commitment to literacy. From picture books sparking young imaginations to scholarly resources challenging intellects, libraries serve as invaluable resources to nurture the lifelong love for learning.

For young learners, school and public libraries are instrumental in laying the foundation for literacy skills that will help shape their academic and personal lives. To improve literacy across Wisconsin for both young and adult learners, libraries play a significant role. Story hours, early literacy programs, and access to diverse children's literature not only foster a love for reading, but also enhance language development and critical thinking skills. Librarians often serve as mentors, guiding young readers toward age-appropriate materials and sparking their curiosity through engaging activities and discussions.

As children grow into adolescents and young adults, libraries remain a constant, continuing to support their educational journey. Whether it is assisting with research projects, providing access to digital resources, or offering tutoring services, librarians serve as trusted allies in helping students navigate the complexities of academia. Moreover, libraries serve as safe havens for teens, providing a welcoming environment where they can explore their interests, connect with peers, and access resources to support their personal and academic growth. While one may not read every book in the library, there should be a book for everyone in the library.

In addition to serving youth, libraries are equally committed to promoting lifelong learning among adults and seniors. From career development workshops to technology training sessions, libraries offer a myriad of resources designed to empower individuals to thrive in an ever-changing world. Furthermore,

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libraries serve as community centers, hosting cultural events, author talks, and discussion groups fostering intellectual stimulation and social connection among library users of all ages.

Behind every thriving library is a team of devoted librarians who work tirelessly to ensure their communities have access to the resources and support they need to succeed. From curating collections to providing reference assistance, librarians wear many hats as they fulfill their mission of promoting literacy and lifelong learning. Their passion, expertise, and unwavering commitment to serving the public deserve our utmost respect, appreciation, and recognition.

As we celebrate National Library Week, let us take a moment to express our gratitude to the public and school librarians who enrich our lives and communities every day. Their dedication to promoting literacy, fostering a love for learning, and creating inclusive spaces where everyone feels welcome is truly commendable. Let us continue to support our libraries and librarians, recognizing them as indispensable champions of education, enlightenment, and empowerment for all ages.

Libraries...where you can go everywhere without going anywhere!

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