



## A Summer of Adventures and Wonder at the Library!

This summer, Reading Public Library came alive with curiosity and connection as children and patrons of all ages discovered new stories, skills, and adventures through our Summer@RPL program. We kicked off the summer with a carnival in the Children’s Department on June 14 and concluded on August 9 with raffles for exciting prizes.

Throughout the summer, patrons of all ages enjoyed a variety of free and fun activities, like visits from KooKoo the Cartoon Magician, Indian Run Environmental Center, Ryan the Bug Man, Animal Rescue League of Berks County, Yocum Institute, Author Kevin McCloskey, and Mr. Boom Boom’s Play Patrol.

Beyond our collaborative programs, we also hosted weekly programs that kept patrons engaged at the library, including Art Studio, Chess Club, Crafty Creations, Knitting for Little Hands, Food for Thought cooking workshops, Movie Matinees, and many more. There was summer food, too! In July, the Northeast Branch held a Hot Dog Day, and in August, the Main Library hosted Cones with Cops, with local police chaplains and officers serving free ice cream cones to the community.

We fostered curiosity by exploring nature together as well! Staff members and environmental educators collaborated to host hikes at Nolde Forest and Berks Nature in July. Library hikers learned about the history of Nolde Forest and the ecosystem of Angelica Creek while exploring

wetlands, meadows, and forest trails, all while experiencing the natural beauty of Berks County.

We want all children in Reading to participate in Summer@RPL, even those who may be unable to visit our buildings. Youth Services and library staff traveled to various sites around Reading to deliver storytimes, arts and crafts, and book giveaways. RPL visited the Salvation Army, Pathstone, Penn Street Market, 3rd and Spruce Recreation Center, Camp Safe Berks, Tec Centro, Riverside Elementary School, 10th and Penn Elementary School, 2nd Street Learning Center, and many childcare centers.



A proud young patron with her caterpillar craft following an author visit with Kevin McCloskey.

Our Summer@RPL Color Our World Reading and Activity Challenges encouraged kids and teens to continue to read and learn during the out-of school months. A color-by-number activity challenge kept kids and teens determined to complete their fully-colored picture and earn prizes and books. Drawings for large prizes, such as Lego sets, arts and crafts kits, and family board games, were held at the end of the program.

We are deeply grateful to the individuals and organizations whose generous donations made Summer@RPL so special this year. Your support was instrumental in bringing a summer of learning and fun to our community! We extend our special thanks to Lisa Fulmer, the Wyomissing Foundation, and the Berks County Community Foundation 2025 First United Church of Christ Mission Fund and St. John’s UCC Reading Fund for their invaluable contributions.

Thank you for your generosity!  
**Emily McNulty, Assistant Director**

# Meet Our 2025 Annual Appeal Chairs: Paul & Karen Oxholm

RPL is thrilled to announce its 2025 Annual Appeal Chairs, Paul and Karen Oxholm. Paul and Karen have been dedicated volunteers and supporters of numerous local nonprofits including the Reading Area Community College, the United Way of Berks County, and the Reading Musical Foundation.

When asked why they were willing to Chair the Annual Appeal, Karen responded, "As a librarian, I have witnessed first hand the impact that libraries can have on students of all ages. The Reading Public Library plays a critical role as a community learning and media center for all of Berks County and all of us benefit from the tremendous resources that are made broadly available through their diverse educational programming."



Paul and Karen Oxholm, our 2025 Annual Appeal Chairs.

## Your Support in Action



Adults and children alike piqued their curiosity meeting live bugs during Ryan the Bug Man's performance in July.



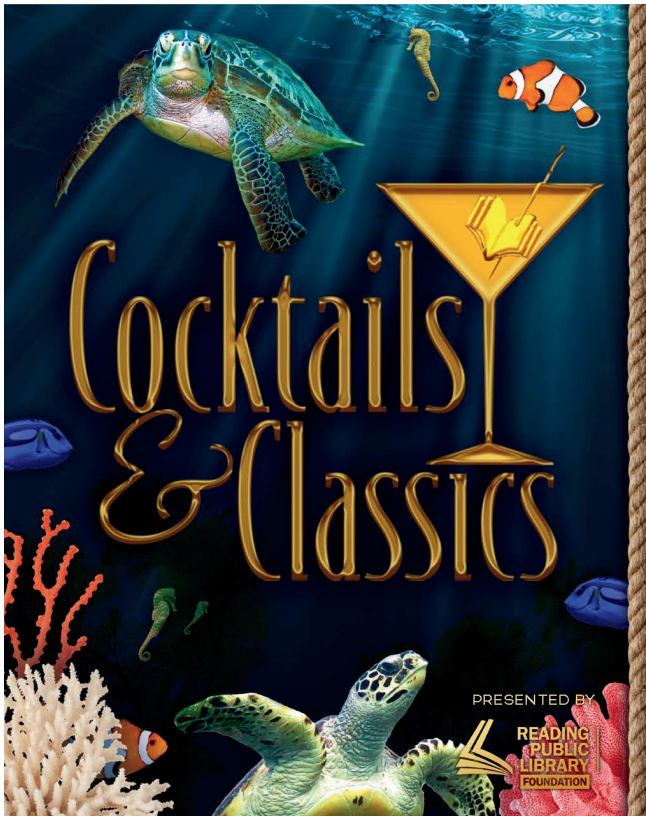
During our field trip with Berks Nature, library patrons had the opportunity to explore a variety of aquatic critters in Angelica Creek.



Our patrons met live hawks, snakes, and owls during our visit with Indian Run Environmental Center!



Mr. Boom Boom got our young patrons up and moving as they learned about musical instruments from various cultures!



Thank you for supporting our library  
at Cocktails & Classics!

We raised nearly

**\$125,000**

for programming, services, and daily  
operations of Reading Public Library!

## Celebrity Bartender Event Raises A Record High!

This past May, RPL raised over \$20,000 at its eleventh annual Celebrity Bartender fundraiser, held May 14 at Saucony Creek Franklin Station Brewpub — the most successful event in the fundraiser’s history.

Celebrity Bartenders Sara Clipp, Keegan Worley, English Bradley, and Suzy Lyszcek took over the bar for an exciting night of drinks and entertainment, with proceeds supporting programs across all RPL branches.

Funds raised during the event benefit children, teens, and adults through free access to music, art, and educational programming. All donations contributed to the continued operation of the Reading Public Library.

“This milestone reflects the growing enthusiasm our community has for supporting the library,” says Carolyn Spano, Director of Advancement



Our 2025 Celebrity Bartenders (left to right): Sara Clipp, Suzy Lyszcek, English Bradley, and Keegan Worley.

and Communications. “We are so grateful to have unwavering support from our community who understands the important role our library plays here in the City of Reading.”

The Reading Public Library would like to extend gratitude to Presenting Sponsor: Suzy Rae Design, the following Supporting Sponsors: Brentwood, Lori & Alan Carman, Berman Voss, and The Standard Group, as well as this year’s Celebrity Bartenders for making the event a great success.

## At the Heart of the Library: Meet Your Reference Team

At Reading Public Library, the Reference Department is more than just a source of information—it's a cornerstone of connection, learning, and community support. Whether you are trying to locate a specific book, filling out a government form, or making sense of your new smartphone, our reference staff is ready to assist with care, expertise, and enthusiasm. The Reference staff's contribution to the RPL mission is the ability to help build bridges between the community and the library.

The most important aspects of the Reference team's work is providing direct support to patrons as they seek information, resources, and opportunities for personal growth. From assisting with job applications, helping navigate city services, or finding materials that match reading levels and interests, they view every interaction as a chance to empower and connect individuals to the tools they need.

Jackie shares how fulfilling it is when patrons leave with not only the materials they came for, but also greater confidence and a sense of belonging. "The library is a welcoming place," she says, "and it's rewarding to see patrons empowered by what they've learned."

John, one of the newer faces on staff, sees his role as one built on connection. "Every interaction offers a chance to learn something new for all parties involved," he reflects. In an age of information overload, he believes the library offers



not just access to knowledge, but guidance, purpose, and human connection.

Nathan emphasizes the importance of curating meaningful collections and forging community relationships. His outreach efforts extend beyond the building's walls, ensuring the library remains a trusted resource and safe space. For him, nothing is more meaningful than helping someone find their next great read—or the answer they needed most.

Stephanie, a seasoned library professional with more than two decades of experience, combines her passion for patron service with a behind-the-scenes role managing digital collections like Overdrive (Libby) and Hoopla. Whether she's helping someone at the information desk or driving the Mobile Tech Van for outreach, she strives to create a space where everyone feels welcome.

Dalai adds a crucial perspective on community connection. "The most important aspects of our work on the reference team is providing direct support to patrons as they seek information, resources, and opportunities for personal growth," she says. Whether it's job applications, city services, or personalized reading suggestions, Dalai sees every interaction as a chance to empower. By offering attentive and culturally sensitive service, she helps ensure that the library is approachable, relevant, and accessible to all.

Together, the Reference Team is a dynamic group committed to lifelong learning, equitable access, and making sure everyone who enters the library feels seen, supported, and inspired.

# Main Library Children's Department: Renovations for Program Expansion

After months of hard work — including weeding collections, shifting books and shelves, and planning for a major renovation — a brand-new programming space at Main Children's Library is officially ready to cultivate life skills for our young library patrons!

This exciting transformation was made possible through the generous financial support of the Odd Fellow's Home for Orphans. Their contribution enabled the library to create a space designed specifically for life skills and work-based learning programs that will serve children and teens across the City of Reading and Berks County.

While the space saw some early use during Summer@RPL with folding tables and benches, full construction was completed on August 21. The renovation included new flooring, an eight foot island with granite countertops, a free standing cabinet to house a convection oven, upgraded electrical systems, and plumbing for a new kitchen sink.

With the renovation complete, the Children's Department will offer after-school programming focused on socialization, creative development, and hands-on learning. Upcoming sessions will



The completed kitchen includes new flooring, an eight foot island, a cabinet, electrical upgrades, and plumbing for a sink.



Our Food for Thought program, where children develop culinary skills, will now be hosted in the newly renovated kitchen area.

teach essential life skills such as cooking, construction, and handwork, helping young participants build confidence and practical knowledge for life.

The space officially debuted on September 9 with Food for Thought, a weekly culinary program where children learn kitchen skills, meal planning, and food safety — all while enjoying the dishes they create together.

Fiber Friends is a new bimonthly program that launched in September, where children will explore the world of fiber arts through fun, hands-on activities. From knitting and crocheting to weaving and basic hand sewing, children will exercise creative expression, build fine motor skills, and gain confidence through their own handmade creations.

Our final new program is Build It, another twice-monthly program that launched in September. Children will explore a wide variety of building toys and kits to spark creativity, problem solving and critical thinking.

We will have books on hand that connect to real-world applications and careers in architecture, engineering, and design while helping participants discover the exciting possibilities their ideas can unlock. Teen programs will begin later in autumn.

We are so excited for this new chapter and can't wait to welcome our children and teens into a space designed to inspire creativity, learning, life skills, and connections.

## Rain Poetry Makes A Splash!

This summer, the sidewalks outside of our Main Library and Northeast Branch transformed into a vibrant gallery of poetry thanks to a creative collaboration between the library, PA Humanities, and the Wyomissing Foundation.

The program was initiated with several poetry writing workshops at the library, St. Peter's Elementary School, and Lauer's Park Elementary School this past spring. Berks County Poet Laureate, Adrian Perez-Roman, led the workshops in tandem with the library's Youth Services Supervisor, Caitlin Johnson.

Then, young poets gathered to read their poetry and reveal their poems in July on the Main Library's sidewalk using watering cans. Some of the poems are stenciled on the sidewalk using a special hydrophobic spray, making them invisible until they are activated with water. Others are displayed on colorful decals.

With watering cans in hand, the young poets playfully revealed the poems on the sidewalk, watching their words illuminate the pavement. The theme around the poetry was "Colors of My City", with many of the poems reflecting on the diversity and vibrancy of Reading.



Two young poets, Khalaya and Carmen, took the stage to read their haiku poem at the Main Library Rain Poetry celebration.



A young poet reading a water-activated poem at the Main Library.

Seventh graders Khalaya Johnson and Carmen Jordan shared their poetic inspiration: "The moonlight shines down / The city is beautiful / As traffic lights shine." Khalaya and Carmen expressed that it was important for them to reflect on how the moonlight guides them through the city, emphasizing the beauty nestled within their everyday experiences.

A second Rain Poetry celebration took place at our Northeast Branch, where our community gathered to celebrate youth creativity. A third installation also debuted at Lauer's Park Elementary School in September. Complimentary copies of our published book containing all poems submitted to Rain Poetry are available at the library.

Our Executive Director, Melissa Adams, expressed her excitement about the project's impact. "It extends the library beyond its four walls, raises the voices of our youth, and offers an interactive experience to the community." She sees the project as a bridge to educational opportunities, celebrating the unique voices of local youth and empowering them to express themselves through writing.

The Rain Poetry project was made possible with the generous support of the Wyomissing Foundation and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, under the administration of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Commonwealth Financing Authority, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

# Help us write the next pages of our story.

You can make a lasting impact by including RPL in your estate plans, such as:

- Your will
- Your IRA or other tax deferred account
- RPL's endowment through Berks County Community Foundation
- Stocks & securities
- Donor-advised funds
- A trust, annuity, or other fund with charitable provisions

We encourage you to consult with a trusted financial or legal advisor to explore your planned giving options. For more information about including the library in a planned gift, please contact Carolyn Spano, Director of Advancement at [Carolyn.Spano@readingpubliclibrary.org](mailto:Carolyn.Spano@readingpubliclibrary.org) or 610-478-8977.



## READING PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION BOARD

Ken Haupt, President • Melissa Adams, Secretary  
Alan Carman, Treasurer • Reneé Dietrich  
Kelsey Frankowski, Esq. • Craig Perrotty  
Chris Phillips • Warren Weik

## READING PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Alan Carman, President • Kaitlin Daley, Vice President  
Michel Micozzi, Secretary • Chris Phillips, Treasurer  
Julia Becker • Sherry Cameron • Leo Hanley  
Keith Mooney, Esq. • Anthony Orozco • Alfonso Peña  
Rick Perez • Arielle Phillips-Law • Jerry Richter  
Salvadore Sepulveda • Warren Weik



Tuesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>  
from 4:00 - 6:30 P.M.

*Enjoy light refreshments, program  
demos, guided tours, and more!*

For more information,  
call 610.478.8977.



**READING  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY**

Read | Play | Live

100 S. Fifth Street , Reading, PA 19602

NON-PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 533  
READING, PA

## Library Hours

### Main Library

610-655-6350

Monday 9:00 - 7:00  
Tuesday 9:00 - 7:00  
Wednesday 9:00 - 5:30  
Thursday 9:00 - 5:30  
Friday 9:00 - 5:30  
Saturday 9:00 - 4:00

### Northeast Branch

610-655-6361

Monday 9:00 - 5:30  
Tuesday 9:00 - 5:30  
Wednesday 10:30 - 7:00  
Thursday 9:00 - 5:30  
Saturday 10:00 - 3:00  
*(Closed Mon, Tue, Thur 1-2) (Closed Wed 2-3)*

### Southeast Branch

610-655-6362

Monday 10:30 - 7:00  
Tuesday 9:00 - 5:30  
Wednesday 9:00 - 5:30  
Thursday 9:00 - 5:30  
Saturday 10:00 - 3:00  
*(Closed Tue, Wed, Thu 1-2) (Closed Mon 2-3)*

### Northwest Library

610-655-6360

Monday 1:00 - 5:30  
Tuesday 2:30 - 7:00  
Wednesday 1:00 - 5:30  
Thursday 1:00 - 5:30

Reference 610-655-6355  
Foundation 610-478-8977

Please accept the sincere gratitude of our patrons, staff, and Board of Trustees for advancing literacy, learning, and culture in our community.

Follow us on social media!



Scan to follow

Find upcoming events & programs at the library at [www.readingpubliclibrary.org](http://www.readingpubliclibrary.org).