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Nebraska State Representative Report
July, 2000

Activities

The Omaha Public Schools, King Science Center Library recently sponsored Bookemon 2000, this year's reading incentive program. The leader, Read-achu, (Jeff Koneck, media specialist), challenged the 4th, 5th, and 6th graders to read every night for at least 30 minutes. Parents helped sponsor the students by signing cards that verified their children's having read for a half hour. Bookemon Trainers like Hiykelpedia (named for the library aide) and Hassebook and Cheereader collected the cards and later traded them in for special Trading Days.

The Omaha Public Library has begun an Online Book Club which offers samples of best-selling books. Club members receive Monday through Friday, e-mail snippets from best-selling books. After two to three chapters have been sent, members will start receiving a new book. If a book stimulates a member's interest she/he can reserve it online. Members will also have the option to purchase books online from Chapter-A-Day, the service that provides the chapter samples to the Omaha Public Library. Fiction, young adult, and audio books will be added in the future to the non-fiction books. (Taken from Omaha Public Library News Release, May 17, 2000)

The South Branch of the Omaha Public Library recently sponsored El Dia de los Ninos - Celebrating Young Americans. The celebration for all children and their families featured entertainment, food, prizes, face painting, and clowns as well as singers and dancers. Booths from community organizations were set up in the street in front of the library. The intent of this national holiday (established by the U.S. Senate in October, 1998) is to celebrate and uplift children and youth throughout the country. (Taken from Omaha Public Library News Release, April 19, 2000)

The Nebraska Library Commission hosted a public meeting for the purpose of reviewing and discussing proposed policies and procedures for a reciprocal borrowing program among Nebraska libraries. The meeting also included discussion of how NebrasKard could be implemented and administered. (Taken from Straight-Talk: Northeast Library System, April, 2000)

Libraries of Promise is a new initiative proposed for Nebraska. This initiative challenges libraries to pledge to support youth by providing some aspect of mentorship, protection, nurturing, teaching, and serving considered crucial to growth and nurturance. Libraries are now submitting planning and implementation ideas. (Taken from NLCommunicator, May, 2000)

Awards

The Jane Pope Geske Award was presented to the John G. Neihardt Foundation and Neihardt Center at the annual meeting of the Nebraska Center for the Book. The Jane Pope Geske Award is presented for exceptional contribution to literacy, books, reading, libraries, book selling, or writing in Nebraska. The Foundation and Center was nominated for its Institute of Vision and Learning, which features a literary competition at the Red Cloud Indian School, a weeklong writer's workshop for intertribal students at Wayne State College, and an art exhibit from the Red Cloud Heritage Center. (Taken from The NCB News, a Publication of the Nebraska Center for the Book, Spring 2000)

During National Library Week, Governor Mike Johanns honored four young writers for their letters to authors, living or dead, describing how the authors' books or stories somehow changed their way of viewing the world. Winners in this Letters about Literature program received cash awards and bound blank books with their names embossed on the cover. Authors chosen were Mildred Taylor, John Grisham, Jerry Spinelli, and Lois Lowry. (Taken from The NCB News, a Publication of the Nebraska Center for the Book, Spring, 2000)

New Facilities

Lincoln City Libraries broke ground on the Loren Corey Eiseley Public Library May 27, 2000. The Eiseley Library is located in Keech Park where park planners envision the Sunflower Forest Amphitheater and a trail through the park with Eiseley quotes along its paths. (Taken from News from the Friends of Loren Eiseley, Summer, 2000)

Personnel

Dee Yost, Republican Valley Library System Administrator since 1989, has resigned to assume an associate professor/public services librarian position at Perkins Library, Hastings College.

Dr. Betsy Lomax is the recipient of the Nebraska Board Choice Award. Currently a librarian for the Omaha Public Schools, she has taught library science courses on an adjunct basis at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She received the prestigious Peter Kiewit Teacher Achievement Award for her teen parents and family literacy program.

Verne Haselwood