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Allen County Public Library Receives over \$1 Million Grant from Foellinger Foundation

Foellinger Foundation's Board of Directors recently approved a \$1,065,000 three-year program grant to the Allen County Public Library (ACPL) for the SPARK Summer Learning and Team Read programs.

Since 1994, Foellinger Foundation has provided nearly \$6 million in funding for the ACPL's research-based SPARK Summer Learning and Team Read programs. SPARK Summer Learning invites Allen County youth, adults, and families to complete reading challenges and participate in activities to win prizes. During summer breaks, the ACPL experiences an increase in youth foot traffic at all fourteen library branches. Many locations also act as FWCS summer meal distribution sites which make it the perfect partner to engage youth and families with literacy and community.

In addition to SPARK, ACPL developed the Team Read program to better serve children and youth in low-income communities. Team Read pairs teen mentors with youth and provides employment opportunities for teens who spend their summer visiting parks, recreation centers, and library branches to read, play games, and act as mentors to area youth. The program serves to prevent learning loss over the summer while also giving the teens an opportunity to learn professionalism and build a resume of job skills.

"We are so grateful for the community's continued support of our summer programs, and no entity has shown more generosity than the Foellinger Foundation," said ACPL Executive Director Susan P. Baier. "This grant provides the critical resources we need to create high quality programs on a scale that makes a real difference in our community."



In 2023's SPARK Summer Learning Program, 14,763 readers logged nearly 8 million minutes of reading. The Library offered 1,291 programs at its fourteen locations with a total attendance of 37,109 participants.

Team Read saw equally successful results with more than 25 teens employed for the summer. According to one partner, Lois Ehinger of Wellspring, the program is critical to combatting summer learning loss, "Not only did our youth see teens spreading the joy that comes with reading, but they were also able to choose books every week for their home library to help us ensure the joy of reading goes home with them."

"No single entity can do it all," said Baier. "But when we work together, pool our resources and talents, and work on a common goal - we can move mountains. Foellinger gets that, and this grant proves their commitment to the youth and the families of Allen County."

About Foellinger Foundation

Foellinger Foundation is a private, charitable foundation that invests in organizations, programming, and initiatives that serve Allen County citizens with the greatest economic need and least opportunity. The Foundation was created in 1958 by Helene Foellinger, The News-Sentinel publisher from 1936 to 1981, and Esther Foellinger, her mother. Visit www.foellinger.org for more information.

About the ACPL

The Allen County Public Library has fostered lifelong learning and discovery in northeast Indiana for more than 125 years. The ACPL consists of fourteen branches throughout Allen County, serving more than one million visitors per year. The ACPL's collection includes more than 2.7 million items, with a circulation total of 3.6 million items borrowed annually. It also houses The Genealogy Center, the nation's largest public genealogy research center, and The Rolland Center for Lincoln Research, consisting of more than 20,000 artifacts related to President Abraham Lincoln.