Congratulations to the 2021 NLA Outstanding Volunteer Award Winners!

Thank you for your contributions to Nebraska libraries!
Kellie has worked for the City of Ravenna for the past 20 years. She is a life long member of our community and patron of our library. Kellie has been active in our Friends of the Ravenna Library for over 10 years. Because she works for the city, she has never been able to be an officer of the group, but she goes over and beyond the call of duty for the group. Kellie often is the chairperson of events and fundraising. Every Halloween for the past 10 years she has chaired our Hallo-weenie fundraiser. Each year it gets bigger and bigger. The Friends group sells Hotdog Meal deals for $2.50 each when Halloween falls on a weeknight. This way when parents get home from work all they have to do is dress their child in their costume and the Friends provide supper before heading out for Trick-or-treating. Games with prizes and treats are also available FREE to give to the kiddos. Kellie does the purchasing, organizing, advertising, BBQing, and clean-up. She volunteers over 20 hours of her own time for this event each year. Last year, due to Covid-19 they were unable to do their Hallo-weenie meals, so Kellie organized the Friends to participate in Ravenna’s Downtown Trunk-Or-Treat event.

Each year the Friends host a “Santa Express” event. The Friends charter a mini bus and travel throughout the town while a member of the community reads aloud *The Polar Express*. This event last 3 nights from 6pm to 9pm each night. Upon returning to the library, everyone received cookies, hot cocoa, and a bell from Santa. Kellie volunteers her time by driving the mini bus (must be a city employee) or reading the story to the participants. Kellie puts so much life into the story that a lot of families will request to be on the bus when she is reading.

For the past 10 years the Friends have put on an old fashion quarter carnival the Saturday before Valentine’s day. Kellie has always been in charge of the silent auction that also goes on during this event. Kellie spends a month of her lunch breaks volunteering to go to each of the businesses around town to collect donations. This year the Friends were unable to have the carnival, due to Covid19. Instead, Kellie helped organize an online silent auction. She collected over 100 items to be on the Facebook auction held the last week in February. Not only did she spend her lunches organizing and gathering the items, but she also put in hours of time calling, collecting and sorting items for the winners of the items on her Saturdays. She then sent out hand written thank you cards to each of the donors. The Friends raised over $2,700 this year.

During April and May of 2020, Kellie came over and helped me with the library’s Facebook Live Storytime’s. She helped put craft kits together, read the book and then made the craft with me. The library did 4 live Storytime’s each week for 8 weeks. Kellie was the guest reader at least once each week and talked the Mayor and police officers in participating too.

Kellie makes my life as the library director a little bit easier. There is only myself and my assistant director that work at the library. Kellie steps up and helps out too many times to even count.

I nominate Kellie Crowell, as the 2021 Outstanding Volunteer because she deserves to be recognized for everything, she does to help her library and her community.
Kleo served on the Grant County Library Board from 1986-2007 and has served on the Aeola H. Brennemann Library Foundation Board from 1997-Present. She has been active on both boards donating numerous hours of her time for over 30 years to help the library succeed. She is always willing to volunteer for our Summer Reading Children’s Program, our annual bake sale and anything else we may ask of her. She is always here with a smile on her face and ready to help. She also served on our regional library system board for 3 years. She is a great advocate for libraries and very much deserves this award.

**Kleo Dredla**

Grant County Library

Nominated by: Jennifer Holthus

---

Don Jardon is a very active volunteer for Hoesch Memorial Library in Alma, Nebraska and has been for longer than I can remember. He is not only a long-standing member of the Library Board, serving as President many years, but has been the treasurer of The Friends of the Library for a large number of years. He has put a great deal of time each year into leadership for the preparation, setting up and hosting of the annual fundraiser for the Friends - the local book sale. Along with the book sale, many times the Friends also conduct a quilt raffle. Don has commissioned a local quilter to make a patriotic quilt to donate to the raffle, which had to be postponed to the upcoming fall book sale, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic closures in 2020. Don handles displaying the quilt, information on it, and where to purchase tickets prior to the raffle, and heads up the ticket drawing.

When tasked with something that needs to be done, he starts in on it as soon as possible. Each year there are around 8-9 planters along the east and south sides of the library and two out by our reading cherub statue in the triangular space leading up to the entrance, that he plants with colorful, long-lasting flowers. He does all the selecting of plants, watering them nearly every day, and pruning them as needed, until the fall when he removes the plants. He keeps our rose bushes trimmed, along with the help of a couple of other volunteers. And he has been adding a beautiful hanging planter of flowers and container of Amaryllis close to the entrance. This year he has chosen to replace the planters, as they are becoming dilapidated.

Library upgrades for our 40+ year old library are of great importance to Don, along with our other Friends. So when it came time to replace the carpet, he was one of the volunteers to help select just the right one. This has given our library a fresh modern look, along with new LED lighting on the beams over the computer tables, in a darker back corner, and in the dimly lit conference room that he helped select.

Don also takes responsibility for helping to replace the American flag on our flag pole, as it takes two people. He is a veteran and knows how important it is to make sure we have a flag that is in pristine condition flying proudly over our library.

We are very thankful for all the things Don does for Hoesch Memorial Library as a volunteer, and wish to nominate him for 2021 Outstanding Volunteer.

**Don Jardon**

Hoesch Memorial Library

Nominated by: Keri Anderson
I am beyond delighted to nominate Stephen and Megan Kaminski as NLA’s Outstanding Volunteers. This couple has been an incredible resource for our small, rural library in western Nebraska. The Kaminskis are Gering, NE residents and own a website design company called Little IT House. Although they live in Gering, their business serves customers across the country. Fortunately for us, they have generously donated their time, talent, experience, and equipment to GPL just when we needed it the most.

Like everyone during this trying time of Covid 19, the Gering Public Library has faced the dilemma of having to halt in-person programming to help our community stay safe but still provide programming to our patrons. The most affected were the youngest of our patrons as storytime could no longer be held at the library. After one heroic attempt at recording storytime ourselves, the Kaminskis stepped in and eagerly offered their services to help us out.

Thus, in early December 2020, Stephen and Megan brought their cameras, lights, microphones, and teleprompter to the Gering Library and spent several hours with Sherri Preston, the Public Services Librarian, and myself recording our Christmas storytime. After that, Stephen and Megan took the footage then edited and produced the video. They have done this every week since early December and will continue through April.

This lovely couple spends an average of three hours each week (two at the library and one at home) producing our storytime videos. They also have been such good sports to be in many of the videos as actors. Along, with virtual storytime production, the Kaminskis, including sons, Reece and Conrad, are avid patrons of our library and Stephen is also a library board member and most recently became a member of our library foundation.

We are so appreciative of the volunteer service this couple has given to the Gering Public Library that we just have to shout their praises to this committee and hope that you will choose them to be honored with this award. They are so deserving of the recognition. To showcase just what they have done for us, I've included a link below to our library website where we post the storytime videos weekly. Each Wednesday morning a new video is posted. Please feel free to take a look at the current video to see an example of their technological talent.

---

Lincoln City Libraries is fortunate to have many outstanding volunteers, yet Martha Kingsbury is particularly distinguished. Martha’s experience in libraries makes her invaluable as she assists with processing new items and organizing children’s materials. Even during 2020, a year in which many volunteers were unable to come to their libraries due to COVID-19, Martha contributed 276 hours, the most of any Lincoln City Libraries volunteer.

Martha’s humor, positivity, and hard work make the Charles H. Gere Branch Library a better place for library staff and customers. She is incredibly deserving of recognition and we cannot express just how much she is appreciated.

Thank you for providing the opportunity for us to nominate Martha Kingsbury for this honor. Her dedication to her community and her library is unmatched. She is a remarkable person and we are grateful for her work.
I am pleased and honoured to nominate Alberta Olson for the 2021 NLA Outstanding Volunteer Award.

Alberta retired in 2015 after 43 years teaching school. Since that time Alberta has continued working with children and their families by volunteering at the school, in her church and here at Cravath Memorial Library.

I could not offer such a successful Summer Reading Program were it not for Alberta and her dedicated volunteer hours. I don’t know what I would do without her! Alberta also meets with individual students here at the library during summer school months. Her genuine care and concern for children and their educational growth is inspirational.

Alberta has impacted students and families in our community at a multi-generational level having taught many of the children, parents and even grandparents! When the kids see Mrs. Olson at football games, basketball games, baseball games, at the library, in the school, she is a constant reminder to the youth in the community that someone cares. We could all only aspire to Alberta’s level of dedication and volunteerism. This community just wouldn’t be the same without her. She is a gem.

Alberta Olson
Cravath Memorial Library
Nominated by: Julianne Rasmussen

I would like to nominate Dennis Schempp for the 2021 NLA Outstanding Volunteer Award. As the library director, I have witnessed firsthand the efforts Dennis has made to help out the library with various projects. Dennis and his wife Jan are long-time residents of Ponca. They owned the local hardware store for many years. As his wife is an avid reader, Dennis has become quite familiar with the happenings at the library. He has many skills to offer and has stated that since he is retired he has the time to be able to give back to the community. He enjoys using his skills and talents to help out whenever and wherever we need him. Dennis has been volunteering for several years now. I remember our summer reading program a few years ago when our theme was SPACE. We needed to get creative with our moon walk station and Dennis came through. He used big paint buckets and drilled holes in the sides to create handles from bungee cords to simulate the astronaut boots. This way, all kids, no matter how short or tall, could maneuver the buckets on their feet to get through the walk. He also provided all the nuts and bolts and materials for the astronaut Fix It station.

When one of our book browsers recently lost a caster and collapsed, he came to the library to check it out and noticed the bottom board was old and rottting. He took the whole thing to his workshop and removed and replaced the bottom and back with new wood and replaced the broken caster. It is now good as new. Most recently, he measured, cut and assembled the wood pieces needed to create our portable seating in the library. This was quite a time consuming project and the results are amazing pieces of furniture for our library! We wish to thank him for all of the time and energy he puts into making the library a safe and fun place to be! Whether it be using his truck to haul away discarded items after a deep cleaning of library to fixing broken furniture to creating fun props for our kids to use during events, we appreciate it all!

Dennis Schempp
Ponca Public Library
Nominated by: Melissa Ann Kebaili
Kim Sharples is a tireless volunteer. She is the vice-president to our Friends of the Library group. She helps every week if needed with the Little Readers Storytime program. Kim is the kind of person that is undeniably reliable. If you need something, she will be there to help. Every week I see her here at the library working to help in any way possible. Most recently Kim has been coming in and spending hours working to get the files for the friends organized. This is not a small task because they are a mess! Two years ago, when we had the Innovation Studio; Kim was one of the trainer/volunteers. She was the only one of 20 volunteers that followed through on teaching people how to use the equipment. She has been our go-to person for all things studio and was a big supporter of getting our own studio space. Just this week I witnessed the perfect example of the kind of volunteer she is. A patron whose primary language is not English came in wanting help filling out some paperwork. This was during the lunch period and the staff was not able to give her the time we would have liked. Kim stepped in and worked with her for 2 hours to help her. I have worked at the library for 3+ years and I am now the new director. I personally have been very grateful for her support and encouragement throughout the beginning of my leadership role. Kim is an asset to the community and a perfect recipient of this award in my humble opinion.

Kim Sharples
Kimball Public Library
Nominated by: Amber Sweetland

I would like to nominate Jenny Sollberger. Jenny is a former teacher with a love for reading and a love for the library. Jenny started out being a sub for the previous librarian when needed. When I came along as the new librarian in July 2019 she started helping out more. At first Jenny came in once during the week for a couple of hours. Since I was new to the library myself and wasn’t sure what the job really consisted of yet she did things that a board member (who was running the library in between the librarian retiring and when I started) suggested to her to do.

We both hit it off while working together. I ran things that I wanted to change by her to get her opinions and together we started doing things that we thought needed to be done. When Covid hit we shut down to the public and went to curbside services only. Jenny helped me go through every single book in the library. We weeded, got rid of the hundreds of donated books that filled cupboards and closets, rearranged the library, and just basically started organizing things the way we think will work the best. Jenny is up to coming in 2 days a week now and working at least 4 hours a day. She actually gets more work done when she’s at the library than I do.

I just told Jenny the other day that I felt bad because it seems like she does all the work and I get paid for it. We are establishing a Foundation and Friends group I really hope we can acquire the funds to start paying her for her time. Jenny says” I love volunteering and if some day there is money to pay me with it will just be the icing on the cake.”

Now that we have this great working relationship I have no idea what I’d ever do without her. I hardly ever ask her to do things because she just knows what needs to be done and does it. I’m not sure of anyone more deserving an award than Jenny.

Jenny Sollberger
Louisville Public Library
Nominated by: Michelle Daniels