

Creswell Library
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February 10, 2021

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Chairs and Members of the Committee,

I apologize that I experienced technical difficulty and was unable to make you hear me even though my screen showed that I was unmuted.

My name is Su Liudahl and I am the Director of the Lane Library District which has just one library located in Creswell in Lane County. Our special district has almost the same boundaries as the Creswell School District and serves a population of 9,400.

While I mostly want to discuss Ready to Read grant funding, I would also like to share how helpful the State Library has been to our organization. They are an amazing resource, especially to small libraries with small staffs where our work can feel isolated and lonely. They make us feel like we are part of a much larger organization.

Last year we received a \$1,272 Ready to Read Grant, for which we are incredibly grateful. Like many libraries, we use our Ready to Read Grant to help fund our Summer Reading Program. As you know, library summer reading programs across the country help maintain and improve reading skills of children who otherwise might see a loss of skills over the summer. Kids who read over the summer start school in the fall ready to learn more. We provide a wide range of activities that are fun and educational for all ages.

Last year each participant was able to select a quality book to keep as their own. We also gave out 826 staff-assembled craft kits for weekly activities that could be done together virtually or with their family. While our numbers were down by at least 40% due to the pandemic, we still had a robust program with kids turning in over 4,500 reading hours. Having the Ready to Read funds gave us the flexibility to spend a little more to make sure the program was engaging.

I'd like to specifically address how important these funds are for small rural libraries. Unfortunately, Oregon has many residents not eligible for any public library service--in fact, our own library district is completely surrounded by areas with no library service at all.

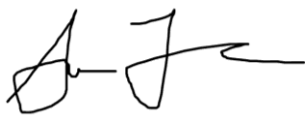
One of the wonderful things about libraries is that they welcome **everyone** to summer reading programs. Because we receive those Ready to Read funds from the **state**, we never hesitate to provide a free book and incentive prizes to kids from outside of our district. It is not only the right thing to do--but using some state funds protects us from anyone questioning the use of **local** tax dollars for the purpose.

Another thing about small rural communities is that there are fewer opportunities for our kids than might be readily available in larger cities around Oregon. Not only is there a lack of entertainment choices, such as movie theaters, sports, shopping; but there is also a lack of educational opportunities like day camps, science museums, performances, and art. Bringing those things directly to our community in a fun and FREE way means the world to our citizens and can open doors for our youth that they did not even know existed.

We are anxious to welcome our families back into the library and provide in-person programming, but we will continue to serve in every way we can in the meantime.

Thank you for your support. I encourage you to continue providing these funds which are used carefully and conscientiously by library staff across the state to give Oregon kids every advantage we can. Thank you.

With much gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Su Liudahl', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Su Liudahl
Director, Lane Library District