



Friends of Benzonia Public Library

Dear Friends,

September 2023

The Friends of Benzonia Public Library ask you again to help us support the library. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, we rely on our old friends and seek new friends to help us provide the extras that keep Benzonia Public Library a vibrant destination in Benzie County. The library's state-designated service area includes all or portions of Benzonia, Homestead, Joyfield, and Lake Townships, but **everyone** (no matter where you might live) is welcome to use the library.

The property tax millage collected by Benzonia Township pays mainly for the basics at the library, such as: rent, staff pay, utilities, and part of collection development, i.e., purchase of books and other materials that the library lends to the public free of charge. We are incredibly grateful for the millage (without which the library could not run), but the millage does **not** fund the library's entire operation. The extras provided by the Friends put our wonderful library over the top. During Benzonia Public Library's most recent fiscal year, the Friends provided over \$12,500 to fund these extras and more:

- Overdrive digital services (eBooks and audio books that are downloadable to your computer, tablet, or mobile device);
- All technical support for library computers & audio-visual aids, including purchase of new monitors for the public computers and paying fees for the website and internet domain;
- A portion of collection development, including books and DVDs;
- The Summer Reading Program, youth services, story time, and library newsletter;
- Funded carpet cleaning and window washing;
- Purchase of various items to loan in the "library of things" as well as "seed money" for items in the "library of things" that are funded by outside grants;
- Small improvements like updated signs in the library and replacement blinds;
- Funded some library speakers such as the ever-popular Ellen Airgood and Bevin Cohen.

When you see more than one person working in the library, the extra help is frequently a volunteer doing background tasks like reshelving books, packing interlibrary loan items, and preparing for programs. Volunteers also create and maintain the website and newsletter, and they staff activities, programs, and special projects. Because our library is one of only five in the state to host the prestigious **Smithsonian Museum on Main Street** traveling exhibit this fall, the Friends will be setting up and manning it; more volunteer docents are urgently needed! Please email benzonialibraryconnect@gmail.com to volunteer for this wonderful opportunity. See the reverse side for the library's impressive list of programs, activities, and services in the library's past fiscal year: July 2022 – June 2023.

As always, we truly appreciate any help you can give to the Friends of Benzonia Public Library, whether it is your hard-earned money or your volunteer time, or both.

Gratefully yours,

The Friends of Benzonia Public Library Board of Directors: Ruth Catton, Roger Dewey, Michael Hughes, Kathleen Johnson, Michelle Leines, Jimmy McLaren, Nicole St. Laurent, and Flint Watt

2022/2023 at Benzonia Public Library!

With the help of an amazing staff, incredible patrons, wonderful Trustees, and the best volunteers we could hope for; Benzonia Public Library continues to be a place of wonder, learning, fun, and connection.

Thanks to the fundraising efforts of our Friends group and many generous donors, support was provided to meet many needs of BPL.

Some of the highlights from July 2022-August 2023 include:

- Plant Diagnostic Clinics with MSU Extension and Master Gardener volunteers ran May through September, offering great advice on plant pests & diseases, lawn, bug or weed identification & recommendations.
- The 2022 Summer Reading program “Oceans of Possibilities” was a huge success with puppet shows, crafts, activities, baby bingo and Prizes!
- The Art of Herbal Tea with Bevin Cohen, offered in 2022, was a popular program about the history and folklore of various herbal ingredients. Participants had the opportunity to create their own herbal blend!
- Preschool Storytime with Miss Anne ran September 2022-May 2023! Fridays at 10:30am Miss Anne joins the kiddos for story time fun, songs, activities and crafts.
- Michigan Notable Book Author, John Wemlinger joined us to discuss his various works including “The Cut”!
- 2022 marked the return of the Holiday Party! With a puppet show, stories, crafts and treats, it was a wonderful time of togetherness and fun!
- HistoryTeller Maureen Esther presented a number of wonderful programs including: King Tut, Queen Elizabeth I, History of Olde Ireland, Titanic Remembered, and First Emperor of China.
- The 2023 Summer Reading Program “All Together Now” provided lots of fun with puppet shows, crafts, activities, baby bingo, and Prizes!
- A wonderful new play kitchen in the Children's Room has been a very welcome addition for our little friends. This was made possible by a grant from the Mid-Michigan Library League and extra funds provided by the Friends of BPL. A young lady donated all of the delightful kitchen supplies.
- A light table with accessories was added to the Children's Room thanks to the Friends of BPL!
- STEM kits have been very popular and we have added more this year with a grant from Newton's Road and the Traverse Area District Library. In October we held a STEM challenge and participants received a take home STEM kit!
- The Library of Things items including Birding Kit, Oral History Backpack, Pickleball Set, and Bean Bag were fun additions to the BPL collection.
- Ice skate check-out was again very popular despite the weather challenges during January-March 2023.
- HotSpot check-outs have been “Hot”. We were able to continue the program thanks to an extension of the grant we received.
- Summer and holiday book, puzzle and craft sales by the Friends of BPL raised funds for the Library! Crafts sold at the Holiday Sale are created by our Repurposeful Librarians and ALL proceeds benefit the library! We are grateful to be surrounded by such talent!
- The Corner Book Shoppe in the library is a popular year round feature selling books and puzzles.
- BPL is excited to be a host site for the Smithsonian Museum on Main Street exhibit, Spark! Places in Innovation. The exhibit will take place in October-November 2023. Stay tuned for more information!

We are so blessed to have such amazing staff, volunteers, and Friends at the library. We look forward to seeing what we can do together in the future!