



FRIENDS' NEWS

Friends of the Surprise Libraries, Inc

Q 2 & Q3 2017

Library Feasibility Study – What's going on?

The City of Surprise recently requested orcutt|winslow to complete a feasibility study on a number of issues relating to libraries in Surprise. The first issue was whether or not the City should continue the Intergovernmental Operating Agreement (IGA) with Maricopa County Library District or take on running the Library as a city library. Maricopa County pays 100% of the costs of a public library until the City reaches a population of 50,000. In the 2010 census the population in Surprise skyrocketed past the 50,000 level to 120,750 residents. Now that the City of Surprise is paying 100% of the cost of both the Northwest Regional (Surprise) Library and the Hollyhock branch Library and a new Library to be built; looking into the benefit of the IGA makes good fiscal sense.

The City has \$4.7 million dollars in developer fees that need to be spent by January 1, 2020 on a NEW library. The consultants looked into what size of a new

library could be built with those fees and to recommend where the new library might be placed. The consultants determined that the existing developer fees would support a 10,000 sq. ft. building with an increase of costs for the new library, of approximately \$1 million dollars. The consultant also looked into what other improvements or changes might be made to the existing libraries within Surprise to enhance the library experience and update or refresh the libraries. Suggestions included things like better signage to bring awareness to the libraries, refreshing interior and exterior paint, reorganizing the location of books to take advantage of exterior light and views. One suggestion was to change the lobby of the library to be more of a lobby, rather than a used book store, with soft seating and perhaps a coffee bar. After the article in the local paper was published Aly met with each Councilmember, individually, to share the impact that Friends has made in the community. Most were not aware of the amount donated to the Library over the

past 15 years (\$205,993) as this money was donated to Maricopa County Library District; or the money donated via the grant program to local teachers, schools libraries, reading specialists and in support of literacy and programs. Friends has contributed \$543,054, since 2003 to Greater Surprise. As of November 7th no final decisions have been made; particularly the decision to remove Friends Place from the Surprise Library Lobby. Many council members have discussed the opportunity for Friends to be in the new library to continue their contributions to the community!

Friends Donate \$20,000 to City of Surprise



After a two year hiatus, Friends was able to donate \$15,000 to the City of Surprise to facilitate opening the Hollyhock library on Saturdays from 11am to 5pm. In the past the Hollyhock library located at 15832 N. Hollyhock Street in the Original Town Site was only open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12pm to 6pm: A

total of 12 hours. The donation of \$15,000 from Friends allowed the City to change the hours from 12-6pm to 1pm to 7pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays and add 6 additional hours of 11 am to 5 pm on Saturday; a 50% increase in availability! The additional \$5,000 was used to support a City Early Learning Program “Tot Time” with additional educational items. This year the City had 71 young people under the age of 5 participating in this program.

Early Literacy a Need in Greater Surprise!

The 2010 Census accounted for 5,550 children under the age of 5 in Surprise. Many are not participating in any early learning or Pre-K program. This year Friends Partnered with Read On Arizona, the City of Surprise, First Things First and Southwest Human Resources to bring Raising a Reader Program to Greater Surprise

First Things First is one of the critical partners in creating a family-centered, comprehensive, collaborative and high-quality early childhood system that supports the development, health and early education of all Arizona's children birth through age 5. First Things First is funded by a tax on all tobacco products and was approved by voters in 2006.

Read On Arizona is a statewide, public/private partnership of agencies, philanthropic organizations, and community stakeholders committed to creating an effective continuum of services to improve language and literacy outcomes for Arizona's children from birth through age eight over the next ten years. Reading is the major foundational skill for all school-based learning, and reading proficiency by third grade is a crucial milestone in a child's future academic success. Third grade reading level is a strong predictor of ninth grade course performance, high school graduation and college attendance. According to the National Research Council for the National Academies, *"Academic success, as defined by high school graduation, can be predicted with reasonable accuracy by knowing someone's reading skill at the end of third grade. A person who is not at least a modestly skilled reader by that time is unlikely to graduate from school."*

To achieve this important milestone, kids need to be on track for success from the time they start school. Research shows that children entering kindergarten without the skills they need to succeed in school rarely read proficiently by third grade.

Read On Greater Surprise is a coalition of local stakeholders working to support the needs of our communities. Read On Greater Surprise includes the cities of Surprise, Youngtown and El Mirage; and the unincorporated areas of Waddell and Whitmann. Representatives from Dysart Unified and Nadaburg Unified School Districts

in conjunction with Friends of the Surprise Libraries and Altrusa of the West Valley are focused on improving the reading scores. Aly Cline was recently named as the North West Regional Champion for Early Literacy by First Things First and is the Chair for Read on Greater Surprise.

Friends partners with City of Surprise Literacy Campaign

For the second year in a row, Friends is partnering with the City of Surprise Literacy Campaign. Students at 14 local schools participate in reading tasks. As the students complete 5 tasks listed on a classroom chart the teachers are able to give students a book buck that the students can bring into Friends' Place to exchange their book bucks for a book or books of their choice. A Grand Prize will be awarded to the teacher who has the greatest participation!

Friends Donate a Record Amount in School Grants in 2017 \$41,938

The Grant Committee included Friends members Manuel De Leon, as Chair with Merrill Edelstein, Ellen McLean and Alyson "Aly" Cline. This year Friends donated a record amount to local schools.

Friends supported our first STEM grant to Desert Oasis Elementary school in Surprise. Christina Ross asked for supplies to help the children in the 6th grade understand building to survive disaster conditions.



A little bit of Change goes a long way! This year Friends matched funds raised by the Riverview School PTA. The teachers and students raised \$1,455.52 in coin. Gary Cline, Treasurer, collected the money from the school each day and accounted for the fundraising by teacher and grade level. Friends matched the money raised bringing the Fundraiser to \$2,911.04. The PTA wanted to support as many grades of the school as possible. The funds were used to purchase a two year program, approved by Dysart Unified School District, Moby Max for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years supporting all grades of the K-8 school. The program

integrates technology that allows for individualized education for students and extra help when students struggle on particular lessons.

Fourth grade teacher, Ms. Smolinski utilizes the tool to keep parents involved in their child's education. Using the Moby Max platform, parents can work with their student at home on key concepts and maintain student excitement about learning and show off their accomplishments throughout the year. This also allows parents and teachers to work together as a team if they see issues in student progress. *"Students find learning fun and enjoy using the program"* says Jayme Gillen-Weisman, President of the Riverview PTA. *"The partnership between the Friends of the Surprise Libraries Inc. and the Riverview School PTA has made a big investment in a resource that is paying off in student achievement and parent/teacher confidence."*

