

Your journey starts here.



# The Bookplate

A Publication of the River Forest Public Library

Fall 2025

*We're Celebrating*  
**120 YEARS**

**On September 26, 1905**, the Library officially opened with 1,000 volumes on the shelves at 508 Park Avenue. The first librarian was Mrs. Stella H. Nida, who received a salary of \$15 per month. Throughout the next several years, use of the Library steadily grew. Hours of operation increased, new volumes were added, and library programs were developed.

**On October 13, 1929**, our current building was opened to the public, six years after leasing the land in 1923. Designed by Prairie School architect William Drummond, the new brick building featured fireplaces and leaded glass windows.

**On September 9, 1989**, ground was broken on the new addition to the Library. The original building was lifted four feet off the ground during the process, and the two parts of the building were connected with a large skylight.

**On October 25, 1992**, the newly expanded River Forest Public Library had its grand opening celebration.



**Read more about  
the Library's history:**



Photos courtesy of the Historical  
Society of Oak Park and River Forest



**River Forest  
Public Library**  
Your journey starts here.

Your place for learning, connection, and inspiration.

## From the Director

We are excited to celebrate the Library's 120th birthday this September! The original River Forest Public Library opened on September 26, 1905, at 508 Park Avenue, thanks to the River Forest Women's Club. The process took seven years and involved a special election to establish a tax levy to fund the Library and to elect the first Library Board. The Women's Club and Board then got to work finding a contractor to construct the building. Visit our website to read the complete history of our library.



The original Library building at 508 Park Avenue

In 2025, the Library continues to be well loved by the River Forest Community and we're still evolving. We're gearing up for a construction project, in fact, to finish and furnish the new Community Room, add a bathroom to the Children's Room, and renovate the Children's staff office space. Construction should take about five months and begin this fall after a contract is awarded. During construction, the Community Room will be unavailable. With a capacity for 26 people, the finished space will be perfect for smaller programs and meetings. The room will have a sink to help with crafting cleanup and an AV setup for presentations and classes. The Children's office space will have three workstations and plenty of room for supplies, and the new bathroom will be a convenient addition to the Children's Room for families or anyone using the Community Room.

I hope you can come to the Library's birthday party to celebrate 120 years of service to the River Forest community. There will be fun activities for the kids, a historical exhibit in partnership with the Oak Park River Forest Museum, and treats.

Happy Birthday, RFPL, and many happy returns!

**Emily Compton, Library Director**



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Public Library**  
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## From the Foundation: Honoring Our Contributors

This year marks 10 years of generous support from those who make the River Forest Public Library Foundation's work possible. Your dedication keeps the Library strong, welcoming, and inspiring for all.

Your gifts help maintain our historic building, support programs like Summer Reading, and care for the Anne T. Smedinghoff Memorial Garden. This year, in addition to updates in the Children's Room that included new **forward-facing board book shelving**, **new iPads**, and **a new display case**, the Foundation funded **new tables for the Barbara Hall Meeting Room**. The new tables are clean and modern, as well as easy to move and store.



To learn more, receive updates, or renew your support, please visit [rfplfoundation.org](https://rfplfoundation.org), email us at [RFPLFoundation@gmail.com](mailto:RFPLFoundation@gmail.com), or scan the QR code. Thank you for helping us make a lasting difference.



**RIVER FOREST PUBLIC  
LIBRARY  
FOUNDATION**



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# Adults

Place  
Your  
Holds  
Now!



## Fiction:

*I'll Be Home for Christmas* by Jenny Bayliss (Sep.)

*The Wilderness* by Angela Flournoy (Sep.)

*Heart the Lover* by Lily King (Oct.)

*Twice* by Mitch Albom (Oct.)

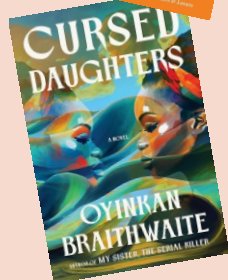
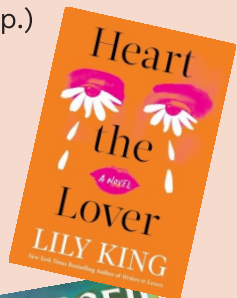
*Cursed Daughters* by Oyinkan Braithwaite (Nov.)

*Palaver* by Bryan Washington (Nov.)

*All My Bones* by P.J. Nelson (Dec.)

*Everybody Wants to Rule the World* by Ace Atkins (Dec.)

*The Last Days of Marilyn Monroe* by James Patterson (Dec.)



## Nonfiction:

*Having It All: What Data Tells Us About Women's Lives and Getting the Most Out of Yours* by Corinne Low (Sep.)

*Future Boy: Back to the Future and My Journey Through the Space-Time Continuum* by Michael J. Fox (Oct.)

*Behind Pearl Harbor* by Christine Kuehn (Nov.)

*Family of Spies: A World War II Story of Nazi Espionage, Betrayal, and the Secret History Behind Pearl Harbor* by Christine Kuehn (Nov.)

# Tweens and Teens

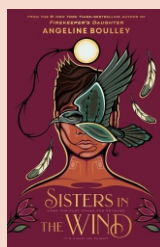
*Sisters in the Wind* by Angeline Boulley (Sep.)

*Dear Jackie* by Jessixa Bagley (Sep.)

*The Experiment* by Rebecca Stead (Oct.)

*The Scammer* by Tiffany D. Jackson (Oct.)

*Holding on for Dear Life* by Dusti Bowling (Oct.)



*A Dark Forgetting* by Kristen Ciccarelli (Nov.)

*How Girls are Made* by Mindy McGinnis (Nov.)

*There's Always Next Year* by Leah Johnson (Dec.)

*Wings of Fire-Escaping Peril: a Graphic Novel* (Dec.)

# Children

*Bones and Beserkers* by Nathan Hale (Sep.)

*Butt or Face Volume 3* by Kari Lavelle (Sep.)

*The Troubling Tonsils* by Aaron Reynolds (Sep.)

*Dog Man 14: Big Jim Believes* by Dav Pilkey (Nov.)

*Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Partypooer* by Jeff Kinney (Oct.)

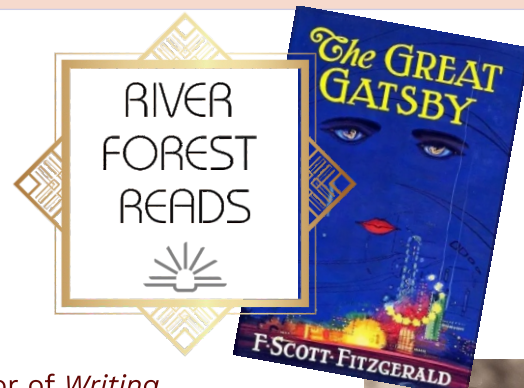
*Jessi Ramsey Pet Sitter* by Ellen Crenshaw (Oct.)

*Spy School Blackout* by Stuart Gibbs (Oct.)



# River Forest Reads *The Great Gatsby*

All are invited to participate in a shared reading experience for members of the community to read and discuss the same book. In honor of its 100th anniversary, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is our River Forest Reads pick for 2025. We encourage everyone to read the book together and attend a series of related programs.



- **Monday, September 8:** Copies of the book will be available for checkout.
- **Sunday, September 14 at 2 PM, *Writing Gatsby*:** William Hazelgrove, author of *Writing Gatsby: The Real Story of the Writing of the Greatest American Novel*, will give a talk on how this monumental novel came to be written.
- **Sunday, September 28 at 2 PM, A Portrayal of Zelda Fitzgerald:** Storyteller & author Lynn Rymarz, known for her first-person portrayals of historical women, joins us to perform as Zelda Fitzgerald.
- **Thursday, October 9 at 7 PM, Community Book Discussion:** Chat about the book and receive a free deluxe hardcover edition of *The Great Gatsby* if you register (optional, while supplies last).
- **Sunday, October 12 at 2 PM, The Roaring Twenties On Film:** Dr. Annette Bochenek, film scholar of Hollywood's Golden Age, will discuss the early film industry of the 1920s.
- **Thursday, October 16 at 6 PM, The Great Gatsby Movie Screening:** Watch the 2013 movie version starring Leonardo DiCaprio. Refreshments will be served.
- **Sunday, October 19 at 2 PM, Vintage Jazz Ensemble Concert:** We'll close River Forest Reads with the sounds of the roaring twenties and a round of Great Gatsby trivia with prizes. 1920s attire encouraged!



# Save These Dates

Events subject to change.  
Please check our website for most current info.



## Adults

### Cheese 101

**Thursday, 9/18, 7-8 PM**

Professional cheesemonger Meredith Meder, owner of Full Circle Cheese in Villa Park, presents an introductory cheese class. She will cover different milk types, cheese styles, and how to buy, cut, and store cheese. Getting hungry? Don't worry, there will be cheese samples to taste! **Registration required.**

### Illinois' Most Storied Cemeteries

**Sunday, 10/26, 2-3:30 PM**

Illinois travel expert John Kokoris returns to the Library for a look at the graves of great Illinoisans and notable monuments to lives well-lived. We'll also look at art and literature inspired by these storied cemeteries.

### Silent Reading Party at Black Fodder Coffee

**Thursday, 11/6, 6:30-8:30 PM**

Attention introverts! Come to our silent reading party at Black Fodder Coffee! We'll have the whole coffee shop to ourselves. Bring a book, have a beverage or coffee, and enjoy reading in a communal setting. Enjoy optional socializing before and after reading. **Registration required.**

### Winter Legends and Lore

**Sunday, 12/7, 2-3:30 PM**

Paranormal researcher Chad Lewis shares strange legends and lore of the winter season. Winter may seem like a quiet time, but it is actually filled with bizarre folklore and twisted holiday traditions for the darkest days of the year!

*Brought to you in partnership  
with River Forest Township.*

## Teens

### Twilight 20th Anniversary Party

**Thursday, 9/25, 3:30-4:30 PM**

**Grades 5-12**

How old are you? "20", he answered promptly. And how long have you been 20? Come celebrate the 20th anniversary of your favorite sparkly vampires with themed games and treats! **Registration required.**

### Haunted Birdhouses

**Wednesday, 10/1, 3:30-4:30 PM**

**Grades 5-8**

Kick off the Spooky Season by decorating your very own haunted bird house! **Registration required.**

### Cupcake Decorating Workshop

**Thursday, 10/16, 3:30-4:30 PM**

**Grades 5-8**

Culinary Arts Instructor Violeta will guide you and give you tips on how to decorate cupcakes. All supplies provided. **Registration required.**

**Also offered to Grades K-4 on 10/15**

### Exam Cram

**12/16, 12/17, & 12/18, 4:30-7:30 PM**

**Grades 9-12**

Come study at the Library! Snacks and de-stressing activities will be provided at this event just for Teens.

## All Ages

### Holiday Cookie Exchange with Mary DiSomma

**Wednesday, 12/3, 7-8 PM**

A cookie exchange with a special treat. Local baker and cookbook author Mary DiSomma will share some of her own cookies and talk about her book *A Gift of Cookies: Recipes to Share with Family and Friends*. **Registration required.**

## Children

### Soft Play

**Friday, 9/12 10-11 AM**

**Ages 0-6 with caregiver**

Children can enjoy a ball pit, double tunnel, seesaw, slide, and more! **Registration required.**

### BollyGroove Diwali Workshop

**Tuesday, 9/23, 10-10:45 AM**

**Grades K-4**

Join Ajanta Chakraborty of Bollywood & Culture Groove for unique cultural stories, vivid visuals, engaging facts, and a fun dance centering on Diwali! **Registration required.**

### Meet & Greet Elsa Storytime

**Friday, 10/10, 10-11:30 AM**

**Ages 0-7**

Come meet Elsa in this magical storytime where you can learn all about her adventures! Kids will have an opportunity to meet Elsa one on one and take some photos as well. **Registration required.**

### My Gym Fitness Presentation

**Tuesday, 11/4, 10:30-11:30 AM**

**Ages 0-10**

Join My Gym for some physical fitness awareness! Participants will join in fitness and movement activities which may include basic tumbling, games, relays, puppet shows, and bubbles! Dress for movement!

### Noon Year's Eve

**Wednesday, 12/31, 11 AM-12 PM**

**Families**

Count down to the noon year with us at this fun annual program. Make a craft (while supplies last), make some noise, and have a dance party with library staff!



# Upcoming Programs \*Indicates registration required.



Childrens ● Tweens/Teens ● Adults ● Everyone ●

9/4	7-8:30 PM	Dooley Band Concert	All Ages (canceled)	SEP
9/12	10-11 AM	Soft Play	Ages 0-6*	
9/14	2-3:30 PM	River Forest Reads: Writing Gatsby	Adult	
9/18	7-8 PM	Cheese 101	Adult*	
9/23	10-10:45 AM	BollyGroove Diwali Workshop	Grades K-4*	
9/25	3:30-4:30 PM	Twilight 20th Anniversary Party	Grades 5-12*	
9/26	All Day	RFPL's 120th Birthday Celebration	All Ages	
9/28	2-3:30 PM	River Forest Reads: A Portrayal of Zelda Fitzgerald	Adult	OCT
10/1	3:30-4:30 PM	Haunted Bird Houses	Grades 5-8*	
10/2	10 AM-12 PM	Touch a Truck	Families	
10/4	2-4 PM	Paper Shredding Event	Adult	
10/6	All Day	Book Character Pumpkin Decorating	Families	
10/9	7-8 PM	River Forest Reads: Community Book Discussion	Adult	
10/10	10-11:30 AM	Elsa Meet & Greet and Storytime (Parties with Character)	Ages 0-7*	
10/12	2-3:30 PM	River Forest Reads: The Roaring Twenties On Film	Adult	
10/15	3:30-4:30 PM	Autumn Cupcake Decorating Workshop	Grades K-4*	
10/16	3:30-4:30 PM	Autumn Cupcake Decorating Workshop	Grades 5-8*	
10/16	6-8:30 PM	River Forest Reads: <i>The Great Gatsby</i> Movie Screening	Adult	
10/19	2-3:30 PM	River Forest Reads: Vintage Jazz Ensemble Concert	Adult	
10/23	3:30-4:30 PM	Super Smash Bros. Tournament	Grades 5-8	
10/25	2-3 PM	American Girl Spooky Tea Party	Grades K-4*	
10/26	2-3:30 PM	Illinois' Most Storied Cemeteries	Adult	
10/30	10 AM-12 PM	Family Movie at the Library ( <i>Hotel Transylvania</i> )	Families	
10/31	10-10:30 AM	Spooktacular Storytime	Ages 0-6	
10/31	11:30 AM-1 PM	Half Day Craft 'n' Snack	Grades 5-8	
11/4	10:30-11:30 AM	My Gym Fitness Presentation	Ages 0-10	NOV
11/6	6:30-8:30 PM	Silent Reading Party at Black Fodder Coffee	Adult	
11/9	2-3:30 PM	<i>This Is Really War: The True Story of Navy Nurse POWs in WWII</i>	Adult	
11/15	All Day	Puzzle Swap	All Ages	
11/19	3:30-4:15 PM	Make and Create Play-Doh	Grades K-4*	
11/26	10 AM-12 PM	Family Movie at the Library ( <i>Paddington in Peru</i> )	Families	DEC
12/3	7-8 PM	Holiday Cookie Exchange with Mary DiSomma	All Ages*	
12/7	2-3:30 PM	Winter Legends and Lore	Adult	
12/13	10-11 AM	Recycled Craft Making: Holiday Edition	Grades PreK-4	
12/16-12/18	4:30-7:30 PM	Exam Cram	Grades 9-12	
12/22	10 AM-12 PM	Family Movie at the Library ( <i>Frozen 2</i> )	Families	
12/31	11 AM-12 PM	Noon Year's Eve	Families	

## Weekly & Monthly Events

### Closures:

8/31, 9/1, 10/17, 11/27

12/24, 12/25, 1/1

Close at 5 PM on 11/26 & 12/31

For a complete  
list of programs  
go to our  
calendar:



- Evening Book Club | Wednesdays, 7-8 PM | 9/3, 10/1, 11/5
- Coffee Monday | Mondays, 10-11 AM | 9/8, 10/6, 11/3, 12/1
- Afternoon Book Club | Wednesdays, 1:30-2:30 PM | 9/10, 10/8, 11/12, 12/10
- Yoga or Meditation with Rhonda Fentry | Saturdays, 2-3 PM | 9/13, 10/11, 11/8, 12/13\*
- Illinois Libraries Present Virtual Programs | Tuesdays, 7-8 PM | 9/16, 10/21, 11/18\*
- Film Lover Fridays | Fridays, 1-3:30 PM | 9/19, 10/24, 11/21, 12/19
- Craft and Chat | Thursdays, 7-8:30 PM | 10/2, 12/11\*
- Middle School Makers | Tuesdays, 3:15-4:30 PM | Check website for dates | Grades 5-8
- Teen Tasters | Thursdays, 3:30-4:30 PM | 9/4, 10/9, 11/13, 12/4 | Grades 5-8\*
- Donuts and Discussion | Thursdays, 3:30-4:30 PM | 9/18, 11/20 | Grades 5-8\*
- STEM Club | Mondays, 3:45-4:30 PM | 9/8, 10/13, 11/10, 12/8 | Grades K-4\*
- Read to a Dog | Tuesdays, 6-7 PM (15 min. slots) | 9/16, 10/21, 11/18, 12/16 | Grades K-4\*
- Crafternoon | Monday, 3:45-4:30 | 9/22, 10/27, 11/24, 12/22 | Grades K-4\*
- LEGO Club | Wednesdays, 3-4 PM | 9/24, 10/29, 11/26 | Grades K-4
- Baby Storytime | Mondays, 10-10:30 AM | 9/29, 10/27, 11/24, 12/29 | Ages 0-1
- Storytimes for Kids | Tues., Weds., Thurs., and Fri. | See website for details



# Library Staff & Board of Trustees

## Library Board of Trustees

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Vice President.....	Ann Berens
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## Library Staff

Director.....	Emily Compton
Operations Manager.....	Shannon Duffy
Children's Services Manager.....	Melaina Maraldi
Materials Services Manager.....	Victoria Muraiti
Adult and Teen Services Manager.....	Shannon Gruber
Adult and Teen Services Librarian.....	Brian Wolowitz
Middle School and Teen Librarian.....	Anne Kowalski
Adult and Teen Services Librarian.....	Ariel Schick
Children's Services Librarian.....	Marissa Walentschik
Marketing and PR Specialist.....	Francisca Arnold



## Library Hours:

Monday-Thursday	9:00 AM-9:00 PM
Friday & Saturday	9:00 AM-5:00 PM
Sunday (Sep.-May)	1:00 PM-5:00 PM

## Contact Us

Phone: 708.366.5205

Website: [www.riverforestlibrary.org](http://www.riverforestlibrary.org)



Car-Rt Sort  
Residential Customer  
River Forest, IL 60305

DESTINATION:

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River Forest Public Library  
735 Lathrop Avenue  
River Forest, IL 60305-1883

