



Library Story

Why Write a Library Story?

If a family member read to you from the day you were born, if you went to the library once a week and you took home as many books as you could carry, you know why a library is important to you and to all community members.

However, what if you never had exposure to the library as a child? What if you never heard a story from a mom, dad, grandmother, grandfather or teacher or friend about how the library made a difference in their lives?

Your story will be posted on the Friends Blog and Facebook page. It may make a difference to those that missed having that library experience.

LENGTH: 300 – 800 words

LAYOUT: Examples Attached

Send your story to

billkennedy0@gmail.com

or submit online at

<http://www.friendsofjrvl.org> & scroll down to **JRVLS IS OUTSIDE THE LINES**

JRVLS is participating in an international celebration of the importance of libraries. We are one of over 200 libraries world wide creating a program that illustrates the important role the library plays in their community. <https://www.getoutsidethelines.org/>

Our goal is to receive 100 stories before September 16.



A Library Story

Katie Webster

Elementary Faith Formation Coordinator, St. James Basilica

My Library and Literacy



L-R Annie, age 8, Isaac, age 10, Seth, age 6, Katie and Jacob, age 12

As a parent of four kids, I know that children's literacy is of utmost importance. I also know that it is not easy in our modern world of screens everywhere. I know genetically my kids are not all made up exactly the same and therefore reading comes easy to some and not as easy to others. That is where the community library comes to the forefront in our family. My children don't always love to read, nor do they always want to go to the library, but when I get them there they almost always find something of interest to them.

I have made it our weekly habit, since they were babies, to go to the library in the name of literacy for my kids, and I will be honest it is mainly due to cost. Nowhere else can I expose my children to such vast free resources as at the library.

In my experience in the elementary school setting, with four kids spanning grades K-5, I find that many of the struggling readers in my kids' schools have the lowest socioeconomic status. This is what makes the library so essential to our community. The library is a place children of any age or economic level can come and experience books beyond their imagination. With great leadership in the library putting on free events and programming that encourage children to come and experience, they might just pick up a book along the way.

When it comes to my own children, anything I can do to get them into the doors of the library is going to be beneficial to their overall love of reading. No matter who you are and what level of reader you are, you can always find something of interest once in the building. It is very hard to find the time in the busy day to day of all of the other noise and choices that kids have these days, but when I put it on the calendar as a weekly event I can see the lifelong reading benefits in my children.

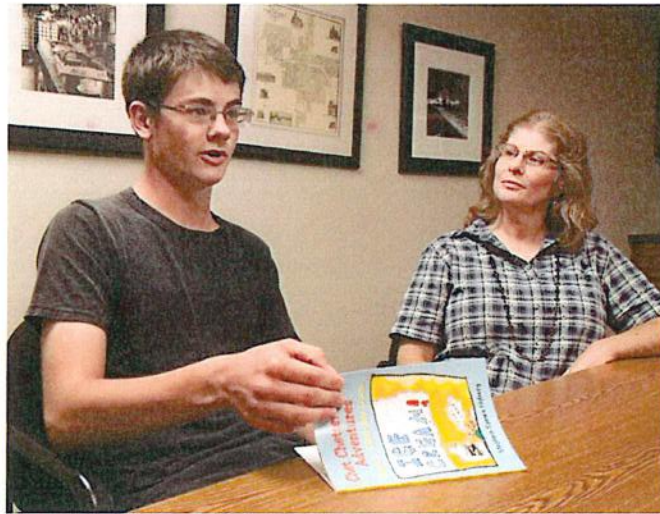


A Library Story

Rebecca Nyberg

Homeschool Mom

Library, Home Schooling, Self-Publishing



Stephen and Rebecca

I began using the children's library on a weekly basis when my oldest children were three and five years old. All of my children became avid readers, and most of them were reading by age five. My local library made homeschooling my five children much easier because I was able to find a multitude of books to interest all of them. Once a child loves books, all of education opens up to them and they are able to learn rapidly. I am thankful to my library for providing these books for us, and for ordering books that I could not afford to purchase myself.

Several of my children love to write, and as part of our homeschool curriculum they write their own stories. Steven has a strong desire to publish his work. He completed a rough draft of a comic book. My local librarian, Jennifer, offered to help us self-publish it. She took an interest in Stephen's book *Chet Chetterson's Adventures*, and her enthusiasm propelled us toward completing our immense project of rewriting and self-publishing a book. She brought books into the library on how to draw comics, as well as current examples of comic book stories. Once we had created the comic book, Jennifer helped to organize a book-signing event and publicity in the newspaper. I am amazed and thankful for all her help. This experience has helped my son go deeper into the creative process and gain a new appreciation for his education as a means to get where he is going in life.



A Library Story

Jim Nyland

Teacher, Librarian, Counselor, Tech Coordinator, High School Assistant Principle, Library Board Member

Library and Dumpsters



It started with a dumpster. Well, actually, it started in a dumpster, but more on that in a minute.

My start in the world of literature was not an encouraging one. I grew up in Thief River Falls, Minnesota. I don't recall a single book ever entering our home, with the exception of the children's books smuggled in by Dot, a wonderful Southern woman who, with her boyfriend, rented a room upstairs at our home. Dot secured cheaper rent by agreeing to babysit us while my parents worked and she loved to read to us aloud before tucking us in to bed. To this day, I cannot think of Pinocchio without "hearing" it recited in my head in a gentle Georgia drawl.

While I enjoyed the library at Northrup Elementary School, there was nothing in my upbringing or back ground that would lead one to believe I would grow up to be anything other than apathetic to reading. Which brings us back to the dumpster.

I grew up terribly bored and often explored on my Schwinn banana seat bike, frantically searching for something to break the monotony. I was a regular male child with lots of time on my hands and a limited sense of appropriate behavior or hygiene, I was attracted to the only thing that seemed even half interesting – garbage, and not just any garbage, business garbage. The stuff stores threw out.

My future life as a flea market and yard sale picker was forged digging through the trash at all of the downtown businesses. My room was filled with half reams of unused carbon paper, miscellaneous office supplies, and bizarre combinations of shelving, all acquired through dumpster diving. If you came across me, feet waving in the air, half submerged, you knew I had found something really good. Each trip I would expand my range, a dumpster at a time, until I

was hitting nearly all of them. And then, one day, I opened the lid for the first time on the dumpster behind Ekren Drug. And my life changed.

I still have dreams about it as a grown man. The lid slams noisily back, and there, covering the bottom of the dumpster, are boxes and boxes of books and magazines. Ekren Drug was the closest thing to a book store in my hometown. It had an entire wall tucked in the back covered with book shelves and every month, the proprietor would, basically, weed, pulling books and magazines that had not sold, ripping off the covers, tossing neatly packed boxes of them into their dumpster.

All free. All for me.

The sight of them made my heart jump. I took as many as I could carry home.

I began to read.

It was a mixed bag of car and hunting magazines, dime store detective novels, racy romances, and pulp sci-fi, and I gobbled it all up. I was intellectually ravenous. Then month after month I went back for more, and I continued to go back until, for reasons I never understood, the books simply stopped appearing. My stash had run dry. So I was left with a dilemma – finding this supply of books opened up my mind and made my love of reading blossom, but now my source of reading material was gone. What to do?

Which brings me to the Pennington County Library.

I had always been well aware of the Pennington County Library. Up until that point, I just never had had a reason to go there. It was just a large, one story building with a decidedly 70's look to it that I passed as I perused nearby dumpsters. So one day, sometime after my book supply had run out and while I was feeling particularly mentally starved, I went in, and was instantly overwhelmed. Stacks and stacks of books. Thousands of them. It was almost intimidating. Just the smell made my head swirl just a bit.

I was in awe. Over the rest of my life in Thief River Falls, the Pennington County Library was practically my second home. I would stay there until closing, reading, and often simply walking the aisles, taking it all in. I went on to become a librarian largely because of that place and although my path was a little unorthodox, it did teach me something about literature and the discovery of the love of reading. How you were raised and what you read early on is nowhere near as important as getting literature into people's hands and letting them find their love for reading. I try very hard to follow that today as an elementary librarian, and I continue to believe the lifetime love of reading can start anywhere.

Even in a dumpster.