



Beyond the Books: What the Lander Library Offers the Community

Lane Bushmeyer, Library Assistant & Marketing

It has become an unavoidable cliché in the library community to assert that libraries are about more than just books. Cliché it may be, but certainly true. The Lander Library makes the case as strongly as any other, despite its relatively small size and lower budget compared even to its modest urban or metropolitan equivalents. Such challenges have not prevented the Lander Library from expanding, adapting, and broadening the range of its resources and offerings to the Lander community and neighboring communities over the years. What follows is a summary of the many things the library does for its patrons beyond giving access to general tome-based information.



To start with the books, though, the library offers more than just its own collection of materials to check out; we also have a large, rotating bank of honor books which require no library card to take home. (*Lane's story is continued on our webpage landerlibraryfriends.com*)



The 2026 Challenge for Charities is underway (May 1 through July 10)! The 2025 C4C campaign awarded record donations to participating charities, including Lander Library Friends Association. Thank you to all who marked LLFA as a recipient. Lander Library Friends Association received over \$22,000.

Will you pitch in again with a gift to the LLFA and help us give the library the resources it needs? Your gift through Challenge for Charities is matched—so it will have a greater impact. You can donate two ways:

- To avoid credit card fees, you can donate by check. Please make your check payable to Lander Community Foundation. On the memo line designate Lander Library Friends Association. Mail to PO Box 1131, Lander, WY 82520.
- Donate online at the LanderCommunityFoundation.org and designate the Lander Library Friends Association as a recipient of your gift.

The Library Says Thanks

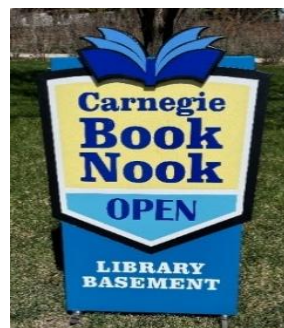
Rachel Arnold, Lander Manager

The supporters of the Lander Library are some of the kindest people. Each and every one of you have shown how much you care for our library and our library staff through your continued backing. We as a staff enjoy the benefits of your generosity, but so do you! Because of your generosity, your gifts have enabled us to purchase new books and movies for all in Lander and Fremont County to enjoy. Programming support helps us develop engaging programs that educate, enrich lives, and bring the community together—this is the goal...togetherness. All of us showing up and experiencing life with each other.



So we say...Thank You. This year, we were able to continue to be creative in our displays and events with Cricut supplies and a Canva subscription. Your annual assistance with the Christmas Open House makes a big difference! You have bolstered the seed library, game nights, collection development, and summer reading programs, as well as aided in updating our children's non-fiction collection. At times, we have even bigger asks. In 2026, we will be purchasing new computer tables and supplementing a generous LOR grant for new computers to go on those tables. The necessity for new, reliable public computers has been a community need for a long time.

Thank you to the kindest people in Lander for your continued support, you all rock!



Tuesday: 1 – 5
Friday: 12 – 4
Saturday: 10: 30 – 2:30
**Lower level of
Carnegie building**

The Book Nook is operated through the Lander Library Friends and staffed by a group of committed, enthusiastic volunteers.

All Book Nook materials are available at no charge, although, monetary donations are much appreciated. Money donated to the Book Nook/LLFA is used to support Lander Library projects and programs.

Regular donations—from local readers and from the Lander Library—keep the Book Nook supplied with a wide variety of books, audio books, DVDs, CDs, and jigsaw puzzles.

What Does the Library Mean to You?

Joni Gould, LLFA Board Member

One of my earliest core memories from childhood is of the tiny branch library in Cokeville, Wyoming. During the long days of summer, my mom agreed to let my younger brother, Jared, and I ride our bikes across



town to the library nearly every day it was open. We'd park our bikes in the metal bike rack, skip up the ramp to the front door, and the cool air would greet us as we made a beeline to the children's section. The colorful bean bags and tiny tables and chairs welcomed us. We'd pull multiple books off the

shelves and begin reading. I'd immediately pile up a teetering stack, and begin to wade through. We read intently for an hour or so, and then we'd check out what we hadn't finished from our stacks. Having my own library card as an elementary-aged kid made me feel really grown up! Next, we'd pedal our bikes to the little grocery store just a bit farther down Main Street to buy some penny candy (yes, candy for literally a penny!), and then make our way home for lunch. After a quick bite and a check-in with Mom, I'd grab a blanket and head over to our neighbor's yard. We lived across the street from the sweetest elderly woman, Helen, whose yard had lush grass and huge shade trees. It was the perfect afternoon reading spot, and the invitation to come into her yard was always open. I spent countless hours lounging on a blanket reading to my heart's content. I read more books than I can count during those summer days, and many of the titles are long forgotten. However, the memory that remains is how the library became a sort of home to me, and has been ever since. No matter where I live, my local library will always be a home away from home.

I currently have the joy and privilege to teach literature and writing to 26 homeschool students. We meet at the Lander library every week to discuss books and ideas—sharing our thoughts through both word and pen—and so this feeling of the library as a home continues in a new way! The librarians are friends, and memories continue to be made with a new generation of kids. I asked a few of my students to share what the library means to them, and here's what they had to say:

LLFA Board:

Marty Brace, Suzanne Crofts, Joni Gould
Becky Packer, Margie Patton,
Cora Lee Reynolds, Carol Steidley,
Ami Vincent, Jeannette Woodward

"The first memory I have of the library is asking my mom where the Clifford books are.

The library means a good thing towards me. It has good selections of books to help people during their studies." ~Hannah, age 10

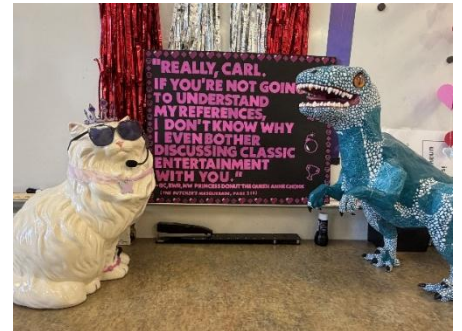
"I am so thankful for the library because it is a classroom for me but also it is where I find great books. But not just for me, for other people it is where they find great books. It can save money for a lot of people who cannot afford books, and that helps people that still love books. That is the awesome thing about libraries; it makes people feel very happy. It is a great place for book lovers." ~Adah, age 9

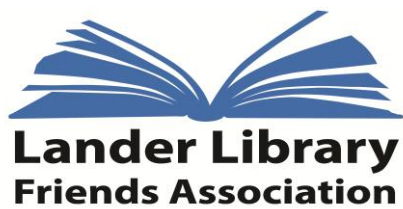
"The library is where I met some of my good friends, at storytime. Also, it is somewhere that is a great place to learn, and I have great friends to learn with." ~Brynlee, age 11



"The library means a lot to me. I love everything about the library, from the books to the librarians! The librarians are never annoyed by my questions, and they always help me with whatever I need when trying to find my next book. They are constantly friendly and always make me feel welcome." ~Libby, age 12

"To me, a library is a calm and quiet place, a place where you can just sit down to read a good book. A library is a place where you can find all sorts of books—scary books, sad books, adventure books, funny books, and even recipe books. The library's got it all! I'm very thankful for our library because we can have meetings, book clubs, and Shakespeare camps, and I love our library!" ~Elli, age 11





landerlibraryfriends.com



(Continued from page 1)

The Book Nook, run by very generous volunteers, takes most of the load of the book donations we receive and ensures that these books have a chance to find a new home rather than being simply thrown away. The Book Nook also occasionally offers DVDs and music CDs as they become available. This is a great system for reusing objects that would otherwise likely end up in a landfill and for introducing patrons to books they may never have encountered otherwise.

Moving beyond paper books, like most libraries we've had to adapt to the new world of ebooks and audiobooks that have become ever more ascendant and popular over the last couple of decades. While we still retain a modest collection of CD books, the main draw for most of our patrons is Libby, a web and mobile app that is intended as something of an alternative to the digital hegemony of Amazon's Kindle and Audible platforms. Libby is free to download and use, and gives patrons access to the entire collection of audiobooks and ebooks that the Wyoming State Library has purchased for its digital collection.

Most of our patrons are aware that we also offer DVDs for checkout in addition to books. We try to fill the gap left by the demise of video rental stores with these offerings, and this is a great option for people who aren't interested in streaming services. DVDs (and the occasional Blu-ray disc) can be found in the adult and children's departments and we are always working on acquiring the newest releases sooner or later. For those who are traveling or don't own a DVD player, we offer a handful of portable DVD players for checkout as well, complete with associated items (headphones, charging cables).

A few years ago, we started a puzzle exchange, a space where patrons can both donate and take home puzzles of all kinds. Although it is advertised as a system of "take a puzzle, leave a puzzle," in reality we don't require puzzle donations for patrons to help themselves to what's on offer, and in fact usually the puzzle shelves are well past overfilled! Patrons are also welcome to work on puzzles in the library, and we usually have at least one puzzle in progress at all times.

The Lander Library has long offered internet services to our patrons, allowing people to stay connected with far-flung contacts through email and social media and keep up with breaking news even if they don't own a computer. Our printing services have also proven essential, with many patrons informing us of their difficulties with home printing technology and their desire to avoid the associated costs. The prices we charge for printing services are generally low and reasonable, and with the loss of most similar services in Lander, we are happy to step into the breach to provide this service.

In addition to basic internet services, the library also connects patrons to a broader learning environment through its many online databases, which cover diverse fields of knowledge from the humanities to the hard sciences as well as practical applied skills like auto maintenance and academic test-taking. These databases are accessible through the GoWYLD website and many of them are made available to our patrons in collaboration with the University of Wyoming and the Wyoming State Library.

Three years ago, we fulfilled a long-gestating goal by starting a seed library. The Elaine Campbell Memorial Seed Library, begun in the spring of 2023, has since become an asset to the community. Named



in honor of one of our earliest and most dedicated seed organizing volunteers, the Seed Library offers free vegetable, herb, and flower seeds to patrons. We eagerly accept donations of extra seeds that patrons have purchased or grown themselves to keep the Seed Library a renewable and constantly

evolving resource that reflects the needs and preferences of the Lander community.

We also try to shed some light on the creative side of the community by hosting art displays. Our annual displays of art from local elementary school students are one example of this, always drawing many viewers. For the past several months, we have also hosted *An Invitation to Tread Lightly*, a collaborative work of seven panels of glazed, handmade stoneware tiles created by the members of Potters of the Wind River, depicting various facets of the Popo Agie River ecosystem. At the time of this writing, this work has yet to be installed in its final home, a welded steel kiosk frame in Jaycee Park, but lucky readers may have already had a chance to see it newly established there. In addition to art, we also host a rotating series of exhibits from the Lander Pioneer Museum. These consist of artifacts that are assembled into themed collections to show different facets of historical life in the Lander area.

Whenever possible, we try to provide an interesting, enjoyable, and educational range of events at the library. Thanks to our partnerships with local organizations, we are privileged to make available to the public all manner of presentations, classes and workshops. Our joint efforts with Sinks Canyon State Park have been especially fruitful in recent years, allowing us to bring to the public presentations on topics of local wildlife and outdoor recreational interest. Regular patrons likely know about the MetOpera streams, which deliver professional performances of classic and new operas all the way from the famed Metropolitan Opera in New York City. We have also long hosted performances from our homegrown Wyoming Shakespeare Festival Company, most recently their two-actor presentation

“Shakespeare’s Greatest Scenes.” In the recent past we have hosted presentations from local authorities on topics as diverse as gardening in Wyoming, health & wellness, and burrowing owl migration. We plan to continue offering public events as often as we can.

A few times per year, we host larger community events that could quite fairly be called parties. Our annual Summer Reading Kickoff is frequently one of our most attended events of the year, and features snacks and activities for children and also usually marks the launch of our summer reading programs for all age groups. Switching to a completely different season, for the past several years we have hosted a holiday open house in December with catered goodies from local businesses, live music, and holiday-themed crafts and activities. We hope these annual gatherings continue to bring community members closer together.

We provide several different sizes of meeting rooms for the public, which are in nearly continuous use throughout the year. Meetings of all kinds take place here, from public presentations by various government agencies and nonprofits to gatherings by private groups to virtual meetings by individuals. These meeting rooms fill a notable gap in our community for indoor spaces that can be rented for a reasonable price or, in many cases, even for free. We host a number of groups who use the rooms regularly and we are usually able to provide a space for newcomers even on short notice. The summer months are especially significant for meeting room use as this is when travelers and vacationers need to get in contact with remote jobs or schooling. Most of these meeting spaces also include televisual projection and presentation technology.

Hopefully it is clear that the Lander Library offers more to the community than its collection of books. From community events to meeting spaces, research databases and garden seeds, we strive to meet the many different needs and interests of our community. Thanks to our wonderful patrons, Friends Association, and Fremont County Library Foundation, we are privileged to continue providing all of these services and to explore new ideas and projects in the future.

