

Behind Every Great Community Is a Great Library

Berne Public Library Celebrates 80 Years of Service

The Berne Public Library's history goes back to March 14, 1935 when the library first opened. The facility has been a valuable resource for the community since its opening and most agree it is still a popular, well-used community resource. The library has not always resided at its current location, moving several times to multiple locations on Main and Jefferson Streets. In 1960 the Library opened at its current location, previously known as the Community Auditorium. In 1991-1992 a complete renovation of the main floor took place. Up until this time, the library was on the main gym floor that remained from the Community Auditorium. Librarian Helen Ratcliff mentions that people still come into the current library with memories of playing basketball here. A second renovation in 1999 took place to house and increase the size of the Children's Department and the Heritage Room in the lower level. Librarian Beth Baumgartner recalls, "Both have grown significantly so that it would not even be possible to include all in 1 floor any longer." Both renovations took place under the supervision of former Library Director Marvel Zuercher.

The Children's Department and Heritage Room has served patrons from the lower level of the library for 14 years. The Children's Department offers a variety of programs and events that encourage reading at all ages. Staff member Shana Neuenschwander has wonderful memories of coming to the library as a child and participating in summer reading programs, checking out books, and seeing the animals on display in the Children's area. Children's Department Administrative Assistant Becky Lehman speaks fondly of past librarians, "I have great memories of the children's librarians that preceded me, especially Bonnie Hammit and Karen Adams. They each grew and developed the Children's Department because of their love for books and love of the children of the Berne community." It is a great place for new families in the community to meet others and gather information about what is available in Berne. The Heritage Room collects and preserves family history, genealogy, photos, and historical information for the Berne community and our area. The Heritage Room offers various programs such as the recent German class. Also in the past, 4-H members and boy scouts/cub scouts have visited the Heritage Room to learn about genealogy. Shana says, "It has been exciting to watch the Heritage Room grow from the back room upstairs to the large area currently used downstairs.

In addition to serving members of the community through the Children's Department and Heritage Room in the lower level, the Adult and Teen area upstairs provides an excellent resource for area residents. The Teen Department strives to keep current and new books available for the teens in the community. The library offers a quiet place to study or do research for school projects. The Teen Department also provides programs and activities throughout the year specifically geared toward teens and young adults.

According to Director Kathy Gerber, “through our materials, the Berne Public Library provides quality reading, viewing, listening, and learning by acquiring books, magazines, DVD’s, and audiobooks for our residents enjoyment and education.” We are also pleased to offer a wide variety of eBook and eAudiobook titles. These titles are compatible with a variety of devices. Patrons must have a valid library card with no fines in order to check out items from NIDL, our eBook vendor. Patrons can use their library card to check out up to 6 titles and/or place 6 titles on hold. Access this online collection by visiting the site <http://nidl.lib.overdrive.com>, or by clicking the NIDL link on the library’s homepage. We also offer the following services, interlibrary loan (ILL), faxing, copies (shrinking and enlarging), tax forms, and computer assistance. ILL allows patrons to borrow a title from another library, ask a librarian for more information.

Be sure to visit the libraries website www.bernepl.lib.in.us for library news, policies, and helpful information. The Library and Heritage Room each have a Facebook page to keep members of the community updated on information. In an effort to extend our social media presence and engage with our community, we are now pinning library related content on Pinterest. The Berne Public Library continues to strive to meet the ever changing needs of our community. We celebrate 80 years of serving our community on March 14th! Be sure to stop in and visit the library on this special day. For more information or questions call 589-2809.