

## Expanded “Many Books One Community” Program Highlights Friendship

Under the creative guidance of the Morton-James Public Library, the annual reading program formerly known as “One Book One Community” is now “Many Books One Community” and will be enriching the lives of even more Nebraska City students as well as adults.

Library Youth Services Manager Amanda Winkler is overseeing “Many Books One Community”. Using feedback from previous years, she developed a program she hopes will engage more readers as well as increase participation throughout the community. With help of media specialists at the many schools involved, Winkler selected books for different reading levels, all under the common theme of friendship. New this year is an adult reading level book, “No Better Friend: A Man, a Dog, and Their Incredible True Story of Friendship and Survival in World War II” by Robert Weintraub. Adults can request a copy of “No Better Friend” by calling the Library at 402-873-5609. There are 100 copies to be given away on a first come first served basis. This book will also be available for check out at Morton-James Public Library.

“I am thrilled to be reaching so many children and their families with this new direction,” Winkler said.

Funding for this year’s “Many Books One Community” comes from the Paul, John, Anton & Doris Wirth Foundation, which granted \$3,527.00 for the cost of Pre-School through 3rd grade books, and The Grace and Harry Moller Endowment Fund, which granted \$2,921.00 to cover 4th grade through adult book categories. The Nebraska City Community Foundation Fund (NCCFF) granted \$1,846.40 to cover the reading guides and craft kits that accompany each book.

Preschool and Kindergarten students will receive “Rescue and Jessica: A Life-Changing Friendship,” a picture book by Jessica Kensky, Patrick Downes and Scott Magoon. The book is based on a true story about a woman athlete amputee and her service dog named Rescue.

1st through 3rd grade students will receive “Ivy Lost and Found” by award winning early reader author Cynthia Lord. The book is about toys from the library called “Book Buddies” who help the children who check them out work through an interpersonal problem in their life.

4th through 6th grade students will be offered a choice between “Moo” by Sharon Creech or “Code Word Courage” by Kirby Larson. “Moo” is a story about a girl and her younger brother who move to rural Maine and find they have an odd neighbor with a menagerie of animals including a cantankerous cow named Zora. The book is about finding community and friendship in unexpected places. “Code Word Courage” is a story set during World War II featuring a stray dog named Bear, 12-year-old Billie, her Marine brother Leo and Leo’s friend Denny, who is a Navajo Code Talker. The book explores friendship during the turbulence of war.

A total of 1,135 books will be given to every Nebraska City student in preschool through 6th grade, Winkler said. "I am working with the Nebraska City Public Schools, Lourdes Central Catholic, NCECBVI, homeschool families, Head Starts, and First Step preschool."

Students are encouraged to take the books home to add to their personal library and to share with family members. Each book comes with a reading guide that will include age-appropriate discussion questions, activity pages and literacy resources for parents along with a list of Library and community events and incentives relating to "Many Books One Community." A craft kit with supplies will also be included with each reading guide.

Students from preschool through 3rd grade will receive a craft kit to make a card in the shape of a dog's face. Students in 4th, 5th, and 6th grade will receive a craft that coincides with the book they choose. For the Code Word Courage book the craft is a book art page with a dog silhouette and for the book Moo, the craft is making a poem banner with paper and ribbon.

In honor of the selection "Moo", there will be a Community Cow Hunt starting on May 1st. A list of participating businesses will be included in the reading guides that will be distributed to all students with instructions on how to collect cow names and turn them in to the Library for a prize. The list and instructions will also be available to pick up at the Library starting May 1st.

More information about Many Books One Community 2023 can be found on the Library's website at [www.morton-jamespubliclibrary.com](http://www.morton-jamespubliclibrary.com)