

The 10 Reasons Why We are Friends of the Durham Public Library:

Reason #1: Libraries sustain democracy!

Libraries provide access to information and multiple points of view so that people can make knowledgeable decisions on public policy throughout their lives. With their collections, programs, and professional expertise, librarians help their patrons identify accurate and authoritative data and use information resources wisely to stay informed. The public library is the only institution in American society whose purpose is to guard against the tyrannies of ignorance and conformity.

Reason #2: Libraries value the individual!

Libraries offer choices between mainstream and alternative points of view, between traditional and visionary concepts, and between monocultural and multicultural perspectives. Library collections and services provide historical, global, cultural, and political contexts that foster a spirit of exploration. Library doors swing open wide for independent thinking.

Reason #3: Libraries break down boundaries!

Libraries offer services and programs for people of all literacy levels, readers with little or no English skills, preschoolers, students, seniors, the homeless, and people with physical or learning disabilities. Libraries rid us of fences that obstruct our vision and our ability to communicate.

Reason #4: Libraries nourish creativity!

By providing an atmosphere that stimulates curiosity, libraries create opportunities for unstructured learning and serendipitous discovery. As repositories not only of books, but of images and a wide variety of media, libraries offer access to the accumulated record of mankind with assistance from professional staff delivering these resources.

Reason #5: Libraries build tech skills!

Library services and programs foster critical thinking skills and information literacy. Library patrons search for jobs online, retrieve health information, access financial planning tools, and look for information on numerous topics that affect their quality of life. Library staff provide assistance with software technology and search strategies. Public libraries serve as technology hubs by offering a wide range of public access computing and internet access services at no charge to user.

Reason #6: Libraries level the playing field!

By making access to information resources and technology available to all, regardless of income, class, or background, a public library levels the playing field and helps close the gap between the rich and the poor. All have equal access to the services the library provides.

Reason #7: Libraries open young minds

Children's librarians offer story hours, book talks, summer reading activities, art projects and other programs to spark youthful imaginations. Bringing children into a library can transport them from the commonplace to the extraordinary. Children's librarians make a difference because they care about the unique developmental needs of every child who comes to them.

Reason #8: Libraries Support Families.

Libraries offer services that enhance activities that are traditionally conducted in homes and schools. Like the families they serve, libraries are adapting to meet the economic and social challenges of the 21st century. In our library, families find professionals dedicated to keeping their services family-friendly by offering a diverse selection of materials and programs to meet the needs of our community. The Patch Program, summer and after-school reading groups, Lego Club, workshops on computer skills, and humanities book discussions are just some of the offerings the library provides which enrich the families of Durham.

Reason #9: Libraries Return High Dividends

Libraries offer big returns to the communities they serve – anywhere from \$1.30 to \$10 in services for every \$1 invested in them. Strong public and school libraries make a town more desirable as a business and a residential location. Americans check out an average of more than seven books a year from public libraries and it costs them about \$34 in taxes – about the cost of a single hardcover book!

Reason #10: Libraries Build Communities

People gather at the library to find and share information, to experience and experiment with the arts and media, and to engage in community discussions. There are many communities to serve: children, scholars, families, seniors, business owners, politicians and countless others. Libraries enhance access to information, encourage learning and unify the people of the community.

For all the reasons we have shared with you, the Friends of the Durham Public Library are glad to volunteer time and resources to make the library the center of our town. Ours is a library to be proud of – vibrant, useful, welcoming, and the place to feel the spirit of our community.