

Branch District Library

# Kidsplace News

## Knowledge is Power in Kidsplace

Not many people would dispute the developmental importance of books, reading, and reading to children. As we prepare children for the future, we must stimulate the children's curiosity and imagination, nurture their learning potential, and promote the practice of lifelong learning.

For many children throughout Branch County this takes place at their local library, in this case the Coldwater branch. Kidsplace provides a rich base for growth in young children, tweens, and teens. If knowledge is the key then the Branch District Library (BDL) constitutes a brilliant opportunity. In Kidsplace we offer children a chance to combine their ideas, knowledge, and desires.

Studies have shown that the most dynamic area in libraries is the children's floor. The physical space may be murals of castles or storybook characters painted on the wall. Whatever the appearance, the staff in Kidsplace work to make the area inviting for children, parents, and families. In Kidsplace we use a variety of manipulatives such as puzzles, games, blocks, toys, and an inclusive attitude to create a fun environment where everyone feels welcome.

Throughout the year materials are purchased to expand our extensive collection of children's books, audio books, DVD's, CD's, and magazines. Many of these items were suggested by parents, teachers or children. By purchasing items of high interest we are able to achieve our goal, which is to offer continuing education opportunities for children and adults.

Computer literacy is another important piece offered to children. It is a vital attribute in the 21st century, especially when considering the workforce. To fill the basic need for computer knowledge, Kidsplace staff provides services to develop children's keyboarding skills and other computer familiarity. Thanks to John and the library, Kidsplace is equipped with 6 computers complete with Internet access. This gives children access to the future and the world around them. Staff in Kidsplace help families find friendly sites that will help children learn and grow at any age level.

When discussing children and libraries, it would not be complete without discussion of the most extensive children's initiative, our Summer Reading Program. By utilizing local talent and guest speakers, children were encouraged to "Dream Big" this past summer during the Summer Reading Program. For some children it sparked an interest as to what they might desire to be as an adult. The enthusiasm of the speakers peaked the interest of the children. It spurred them on to check out books on the subject or do research on the computers to learn more about a particular occupation. Nearly 20 years old, the BDL's Summer Reading Program is designed to provide incentives for school-aged children for reading. Entertaining and educational programs are also provided for children to pass their summer.

When it comes to young children, evidence suggests that full brain development requires being spoken to, read to, exposed to books—and to adults who read to them. With this in mind, the staff in Kidsplace continue to offer reading programs for children and their caregivers.

"Knowledge is Power"

# The Polar Express



Inspired by the movie produced by Warner Brothers Entertainment and the award winning book by Chris Van Allsburg, the Polar Express train made it's annual trip during the holiday season for families in Branch County. This event was hosted by the Branch District Library's Quincy, Bronson and Cold-water branches.

The Polar Express made a mystical round-trip journey to the North Pole. It wasn't the usual planned trip taken in the past, due to inclement weather. The Polar Express is approximately a forty-five minute round-trip excursion with the children returning to the Little River Railroad Train Depot to visit with dear ole Santa.

Being Santa is a special job for a special person. We were fortunate that Steve Kasperski enjoys playing the part of Santa. He not only spent three and a half hours dressed in Santa attire for one weekend event, he returned the following Saturday to do it all over again. Then, after all the families had gone home, he volunteered to be our Santa next year. Yes, it definitely takes a special person and that person is Steve. Thanks Steve!

We need to give a special thank you to Chris Rodesiler who has played the role of our Conductor and has read the story of the Polar Express for several years for this event.

Also, if you happen to run into a Noon Rotary member or someone from Taylor's Stationer-Hallmark, please express your appreciation for their generous support of this event making it free of charge to our families.

This event would not have happened without the wonderful staff at the Little River Railroad. Each year they go above and beyond to make this a memorable occasion for everyone that rides. They have even come up with a new plan for next year that everyone will love.

Happy New Year to All!

Pssst...did you hear that Gail Clover and her family were treated to first class seats? We like to give our Board members special treatment.

