

2012 MEDAL WINNER NATURITA COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Speakers: Paul Paladino, Jaimy Fulbright

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>> FEMALE SPEAKER: The National Medal for Museum and Library Services is the nation's highest honor for libraries and museums that are serving their communities in exceptional ways.

Naturita Public Library Director Paul Paladino and community member Jaimy Fulbright traveled to Washington from Naturita, Colorado to receive the National Medal and spoke to IMLS about how the library impacts the community.

>> JAIMY FULBRIGHT: Our community in Naturita is very small. There is 546 people. Very, very small and most people come to the library for internet purposes, job searching.

>> PAUL PALADINO: It is the gathering place for the community. It is situated right centrally in town and across the street from the elementary school, the post office, and the grocery store. So people come into town to do all of their business and connect with the library as well.

When we were looking for sites, proximity to the center of town was important. We actually purchased an old auto parts store with the intent of using it but it turned out that we had to scrape the site and build the building entirely from scratch.

The old library was less than 500 square feet. The new library is 4,400. It has a meeting room. They had one computer before. They have six for the public now. It is used constantly. I mean, this is an area that has 20% of the people don't have phone service of any kind so of course they don't have - more don't have internet access. This is their only access to the outside world.

>> JAIMY FULBRIGHT: My job at the library, I am a youth services librarian so I actually do the program for the literacy for the little ones. It's the early literacy for small children ages 0 to 5. We focus on reading, writing, playing, and we

really have this great method. It is called the pyramid method. We keep our friends safe, ourselves safe, and our things safe.

I really like the children's programming because when my kids are there they don't even - they don't realize they are learning. They are just having fun.

>> PAUL PALADINO: Jaimy's early literacy program really - it is designed on a national program, Every Child Ready to Read that came out of the American Library Association a number of years ago.

We use stories, we use literature to teach concepts such as writing, letter recognition, and color recognition and studies keep showing that it is very important that children from birth to age 3 is when their brains are really the most receptive and they are the most formative.

So a big part of the program and a big part of what Jaimy does is she teaches the parents how to interact with their kids and how to teach their kids so parents can then go home and work with their kids throughout the week.

>> JAIMY FULBRIGHT: I feel it is very important to involve children and parents in the program. It is kind of reinforcing so the kids don't forget what they have learned and it is just reinforcing it throughout the week so they come back with all, this is what we did last week and we are going to transition into this this week. And having the parents back that is just amazing.

We do a wonderful summer reading program and throughout the year the older kids have programming too during the week because we don't have school on Fridays because the school district couldn't afford it so we kind of stepped up and provided programming on Fridays for children to get the extra education.

Friday programming is geared for ages second grade through eighth grade and we gear towards reading, math, science, just anywhere that we see in the school that they need extra help. We are there to put it in.

The library does play a huge part in our community. Our circulation of books has went up 206%. We have issued 800 new library cards and that is more people than we have in our community so people outside of our area are coming to our library as well.

>> PAUL PALADINO: Libraries, like other public institutions, are suffering for resources but we are - we are managing to grow and to put money into creative and finding niches to fill and focusing all of our efforts on what works and what improves the lives of our customers, and they come back and they support us.