



2016 Awards Application Form

Name of Award: Outstanding Library Award

Nominee's Contact Info

Name: _____

Library/Business: Wells County Public Library

Street Address: 200 W. Washington St.

City, State, Zip: Bluffton, IN 46714

Phone: 260-824-1612 **E-mail:** sdavis @wellscolibrary.org

Contact Information for the Person Submitting the Nomination

Name: Stephanie Davis

Library/Business: (same as above)

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ **E-mail:** _____

Nominations must meet the Minimum Criteria for Consideration as outlined in the Description of Awards. Nominations that fail to meet the minimum criteria will be automatically disqualified. No added weight will be given to a higher number of supporting materials, as long as the minimum criteria are sufficiently documented. It is the responsibility of the nominator to ensure all supporting documentation is received by the ILF Office. ILF staff will acknowledge receipt of nominations but will not notify a nominator of deficiencies in the nomination. To help us determine eligibility, the committee requests that application for awards to an individual include a professional résumé or curriculum vita of the nominee when possible.

Please submit by June 30, 2016 to:
Awards, Honors and Scholarship
Committee Indiana Library Federation
941 E. 86th Street, Suite 260
Indianapolis, IN 46240



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June 24, 2016

Awards, Honors and Scholarship Committee
Indiana Library Federation
941 E. 86th Street, Suite 260
Indianapolis, IN 46240

Dear Awards, Honors and Scholarship Committee:

I would like to nominate the Wells County Public Library (WCPL) for the Outstanding Library Award. I believe that our library qualifies under both of your definitions of an outstanding library.

WCPL consistently exceeds the expectations of our users. WCPL is a medium size library in Northeast Indiana servicing a rural population of 27,188. It is one of just over a dozen county-wide libraries in Indiana with 65% of the residents having library cards. WCPL is the previous winner of ALA's John Cotton Dana Awards and ILF's Sara Laughlin Marketing Award for their total rebranding and marketing strategy.

For as long as I can remember, our library has always been a forerunner for adopting new ideas and new technology. We were one of the first to automate; among the first to have a public computer in the library; one of the first to put a branch inside a school building using satellite communications; among the first to take on new formats, from VHS to digital magazines; early to integrate play-based learning into our birth through school-aged programming; and most recently, the first Indiana library to completely reclassify own entire collection using our own word-based system, **WordWise**.

WCPL has also made notable improvements of service based on cooperation with other libraries and community organizations. In 2001 WCPL served as one of the core libraries in our area **Continuous Improvement Group**, working together ever since to share ideas for the betterment of our libraries. In 2011 WCPL organized an area consortium (**Northeast Indiana Digital Library**) to purchase and provide digital content to all our libraries. Also in 2011 WCPL partnered with the Wells County Foundation, the Wells County United Way, and a local artist to create a very unique, widely-emulated **1000 Books Before Kindergarten Program**. In 2015 WCPL partnered with the Chamber of Commerce, Bluffton NOW, and the city of Bluffton on the community's first ever **TigerTank Competition** to fill an empty space in the library with a winning business.

In 2016 WCPL partnered with a donor, two park departments, and two Eagle Scout candidates to install two **StoryWalks** in our community. Also in 2016 WCPL partnered with the Chamber of Commerce, city and county government, numerous organizations, and churches to work on a year-long Bicentennial Celebration. The library is a key participant with several staff serving on the county committee, creating and producing the Indiana Bicentennial Events and Activities Brochure for Wells County, and submitting a funding grant for a special week-long **Bicentennial Holiday Celebration** in December. Later in 2016 WCPL will sponsor our first



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ever **Book Festival** in collaboration with all three county schools, the local foundation, the Wells County Leadership Academy and the Bluffton Parks Department. WCPL is presently partnering with the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance by providing a work space within our library for an area field representative in the assessor's division.

WCPL's success can be further demonstrated through its contributions in the requested areas:

- Cooperation/partnerships with other libraries:
 - Continuous Improvement Group
 - Northeast Indiana Digital Library
 - Staff involvement with ILF through CYPD, District, IPLA, and ILF board positions
 - Sponsoring annual Caldecott Workshops
 - Sponsoring teen roundtables
 - Mentoring libraries interested in word-based classification systems
- Cooperation/partnerships with community organizations:
 - Community street banners
 - Tiger Tank Project
 - Story Walk
 - Wells County Leadership Academy support as both presenters and participants
 - Theater Thursday, a cooperative effort of Bluffton Regional Hospital, the Parks Department, and the library
 - Teaching computer classes and book programs for the Parks Department's Senior Exploration Series
 - Cataloging and making the Wells County's Historical Society's book collections available in WCPL's catalog
 - Staff participation on community boards such as the Chamber, Wells County Foundation, United Way and Bluffton NOW
 - Visiting every school in all three of our county systems during school registrations days, insuring that every student had a library card for online resources
 - Partnering with a local school system to offer iPad instruction to those purchasing iPads in a school sale
 - Partnering with city to provide iPad training to city council members in their effort to move to paperless meetings
- Notable service and programming:
 - Created a customer friendly library and collection with the word-based classification system by thoroughly reorganizing how we identify and label our collections
 - Regular computer and iPad classes, clubs, and fairs
 - Unique book clubs: Cookbook club, Girls Not Allowed & Boys Not Allowed book clubs, Mayor's Book Chat, and several Chat 'n Chew lunch time books clubs at a county middle school and high school
 - "Bag" collections: Vacation Bags, Birthday Bags, Teacher Bags, Science Bags, Grab 'n Go bags, Weekend bags



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- Embraced the concept of play-based learning, incorporating it into all weekly children's programs
- 1000 Books Before Kindergarten Program has 124 completions since its conception 5 years ago
- Contributes to staff development:
 - Since awarded PLA's 2007 Grow Your Own staff development grant, WCPL has financially supported eleven staff in obtaining library certification or an MLS degree
 - Eight WCPL staff have graduated from the Wells County Leadership Academy, many at the two-year level; many now serve as presenters for the Academy
 - Participation in library association committees and boards is encouraged and supported
 - Participation in local community committees and boards is encouraged and supported
- Physical facilities
 - In the past nine years both of WCPL's facilities were expanded and remodeled, doubling the library space

WCPL's 2013-17 Strategic Plan can be summarized by four action words:

Welcome

Collaborate

Promote

Learn

These words represent the four goals that have been a roadmap for our board and staff as we work to meet the needs of Wells County and its patrons.

- WCPL is a welcoming community spot
- WCPL is a collaborative community partner
- WCPL promotes its services and collections
- WCPL is a lifelong learning connection

WCPL has worked hard to address all of our goals, but it is obvious from the examples listed in this submission that collaborative partnerships has been and still is a high priority.

WCPL is an important part of our community primarily due to the hard work and dedication of those involved. They are as important as the facility, the collection, and the services. People make the library –its trustees, its staff and its patrons. It is for the recognition of the Wells County Library board, staff, and patrons that I humbly submit this award application.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Davis

Library Director

Wells County Public Library



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ATTACHMENTS

Letters of support:

- Board
 - Graig Stettner
- Patrons
 - Jean Bordner
 - Rebecca Brown
 - Lynn Elliott
- Community Leaders
 - Mayor Ted Ellis, City of Bluffton
 - Erin Prible, Wells County Chamber of Commerce
 - Julie Meitzler, Principal, Bluffton Harrison Elementary
- Professional Librarians
 - Kathryn Gerber, Berne Public Library Director
 - Janelle Graber, Eckhart Public Library, Director
 - Katie Mullins, Kendallville Public Library, Director
 - Lissa Krull, Nappanee Public Library, Director

Materials;

- WordWise Classification Brochures
- Downtown Bluffton: Self-guided Walking Tour
- Indiana's Bicentennial: 2016 Wells County Events & Activities Booklet
- Story Walk Flyer and Photos
- 1000 Books Before Kindergarten Reading Log
- Tiger Tank TV News Coverage
- Book Report Newsletter Jan-Apr 2016