

## Press Release

### **Kansas Book Festival Aids Needy Kansas Libraries**

NEWS PROVIDED BY Kansas Book Festival May 20, 2022

TOPEKA, May 20, 2022—Every year for the last decade, the Kansas Book Festival has granted funding to Kansas libraries seeking to improve their book holdings or technology, distributing \$100,000 in total. This year's grants, just released, will assist five selected libraries, including Quinter High School Library in western Kansas, Circle Oil Hill Elementary School Library in southern Kansas, and Lebanon Community Library in north Kansas.

Needs vary. At Circle Oil Hill Elementary School, in El Dorado, the student population has become more diverse, and an \$800 grant will help to provide books that appeal to kids from multiple cultures. Jonna Garbee, the library media specialist at Circle Oil Hill, says, "It is important for our students to learn about history and the many injustices suffered by people of color, but I am realizing that many of the books in our library focus only on suffering and not on everyday living. I want to provide books that show children of all races and cultures solving mysteries, having adventure, and laughing with friends."

At Lebanon Kansas, where 28% of the patrons are over 60, there is a need for large-print books. Linda Scott, the Lebanon librarian, says, "Many of our patrons do not have nor desire internet. They state the preference for books they can hold in their hands. We wish to fill an accessibility need for them by adding current titles in large-print format." An \$800 grant will help Lebanon Community Library to provide 30 new large-print novels.

Some of the annual grants from the Kansas Book Festival go to technology instead of books. Quinter High School is committed to creating an innovative learning lab, where students can collaborate and create using 21st century tech tools. According to Valerie Brown-Kuchera, the K-12 Library Director at Quinter, this lab will include a podcast booth, a recording studio, 3D printing pens, a poster printer, and other devices that will inspire students to imagine and invent in contemporary ways. A \$1000 grant from the Festival will help to purchase some of the required technology.

This year, two other libraries have been selected to receive funding from the Kansas Book Festival. Lincoln Junior Senior High School Library will receive \$800 for the purchase of graphic novels and updated nonfiction, and Twin Valley Schools will receive \$1600 for replacement of failing computers.

The Library Grant Program of the Kansas Book Festival, begun by former First Lady Mary Brownback when she brought the Festival to Topeka in 2011, is dependent on the generosity of donating individuals and agencies. This year, the Festival will take place on Saturday, September 24, on the grounds of Washburn University in Topeka, and it is free and open to the public.