



BELFAST FREE LIBRARY *www.belfastlibrary.org*

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Dear Library Supporter,

I would like to take this opportunity, as I enter my final year as a Library Trustee, to share some of my thoughts about libraries and perhaps inspire you to generously support the Belfast Free Library during this Annual Appeal.

This winter I had the opportunity to read five books that all centered around the theme of libraries. One book was fiction, two were historical fiction and two were nonfiction. Every one of these books featured individuals who put their lives at great risk in order to save the library—from a devastating fire, or a Nazi takeover, or world-wide cataclysm, or a cruel and hopeless war.

Without a doubt, the most profound of the five books was the true account of a group of Syrian citizens that risked their lives to salvage books from throughout their bombed-out city so they could secretly create a library that eventually grew to several thousand books. Books were “borrowed” or read on the premises of a bombed building that contained scavenged chairs and sofas to sit on. It became a gathering place during a time of destruction and chaos.

As I read these books, I couldn’t help but think about why all these individuals (real and imagined) were so profoundly devoted to libraries. I think it’s because libraries, for the past 3,000 years, have proved to be respected stewards of knowledge and therefore they offer a “world of infinite opportunities”—they offer hope, along with the belief that what we humans speak and write about is ageless and vital to our survival. Even in war-torn Syria, libraries have communicated our basic human values: connection with others, equality, freedom and hopefulness.

The Belfast Free Library plays a huge role in the social infrastructure of the City of Belfast—it allows and promotes social engagement and speaks to an individual’s great potential. From **partnering** with parents in child development beginning at birth—to **preserving** our cultural heritage and history, to **presenting** community artwork, entertainment and education events, your library has a special way of communicating our underlying values.

The Board of Trustees respectfully request your generous support of your Belfast Free Library. The gifts you give ensure that the library will not just meet your needs but will offer a “world of infinite opportunities” for you and your family.

With gratitude,

Kay Zegel, Library Board President

Your donation can also be made at the library’s website www.belfastlibrary.org

The Belfast Free Library is a not for profit organization recognized as tax exempt under Internal Revenue code section 501(c)(3). Contributions to the Belfast Free Library are tax-deductible to the fullest extent established by law.

Kay’s Winter Reading:

The Paris Library
by Janet Skeslien Charles

The Book Collectors
by Delphine Minoui

The Library Book
by Susan Orlean

Cloud Cuckoo Land
by Anthony Doerr

The Personal Librarian
*by Heather Terrell &
Victoria Christopher Murray*