

Letter to the Editor

Send to: Esteban Candelaria ecandelaria@sfnewmexican.com.

A Positive Success Flying under the Radar

It's easy to miss a success story in today's flood of negative news. But there is a bright spot shining in clear sight - The Santa Fe Public Library. The Library is an astounding treasure that serves our entire community through free programs and free access to information and inspiration.

Margaret Neill became Library Division Director in July 2022. She has delivered new excitement and program innovation that has driven circulation and attendance to new levels. Between 2022 and 2024 circulation climbed 42%; children and teen program attendance increased by 87% and adult attendance almost doubled to 20,000 a year. These wide-ranging programs speak to the concerns and interests of Santa Feans and inform with new ideas.

In a state that repeatedly ranks last in student educational outcomes, our Library is first in offering opportunity and inspiration. The library is there for students and families, schoolteachers, grandparents, single mothers and fathers as well as job seekers, adult learners, preschoolers and the curious and inquiring. The Library's Community is all of us.

Libraries are about more than books, and our Library is leading the way creating a safe place for learning and education while bringing people together and building community.

A friend recently called to say how wonderful the library's "Color our World" summer reading program was, from the lively decor to the impressive line-up of activities. As a single mother of two, she was deeply grateful for the amazing free programming offered to her children. Many do not realize that while the City provides funding for library staffing, operations and building maintenance, it does not fund programs.

The Friends of the Santa Fe Public Library is a proud sponsor of the Library's programming funded through individual donations, memberships, grants and book sales. So it was disheartening to learn that as demand for Library programs continues to soar, the City chose to cut Library's operating funds this year while the City's overall budget increased by \$40 million. The Library is a singular success story in Santa Fe, one that benefits every age group and serves all corners of the city. If you value the Library's work, let the mayor and city council know how disappointed you are.

The Friends of the Santa Fe Public Library Board

www.friendsofthesantafelibrary.org