

KALEIDOSCOPE

Kent District Library // Information. Ideas. Excitement!

Fall 2021

What's Your Story?



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What's your story?

Over 10 years ago, I had one of my crazy dashboard ideas while driving (which rank right up there with shower ideas). What if KDL offered a writing contest much like the singing contests that were so popular at the time? People could share their talent, judges could score and the public could weigh in with a popular vote. And, of course, there would be cash prizes and the opportunity to be published.

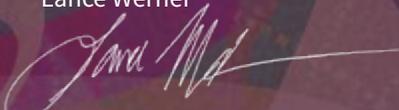
That epiphany was the birth of the Write Michigan Short Story Contest, now in its 10th year. Write Michigan gives writers of all ages a chance to share their story — and we all have a story. Besides being a beautiful form of expression and storytelling, writing has long been used as a therapeutic tool. Expressive writing can heal us. Now, more than ever, Write Michigan is just what the doctor ordered. I'm so proud of the way Write Michigan showcases statewide talent and celebrates the written word, one of our favorite things at KDL. I'm also proud of the longevity of the contest, the school partnership component and the Spanish-language category.

I want to encourage you, your children and your students to enter the Write Michigan Short Story Contest this year. See page 17 for details. It's your chance to be a part of history.

We can't wait to read your story!



Lance Werner



Executive Director



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About the cover:

Our Write Michigan artwork was created by Adolfo Valle.

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Forever Things

By Karen McPhee

Kerry sat at her desk and looked out at the empty classroom. Just minutes before, 24 third graders had filled the worn and aging space with non-stop chatter and Tigger-like energy as they waited for the bell to sound, signaling the end of another school day and their release from captivity. They were gone in a chaotic burst, but Kerry could still feel their vivacity and smell the earthy sweat they had worked up during a late-afternoon recess. She smiled thinking about how Louie, the school's janitor of some 20-odd years, would lightly scold her as he cleaned up the crumbs of Goldfish crackers scattered across the landscape. She handed them out all afternoon to keep her students' energy up and their attention focused on equivalent fractions. In her heart, she knew Louie appreciated the extra care with which she tended her unruly flock even as he complained about the "Goldfish glitter."

For ten years, since her first day as a teacher, Kerry had been assigned to this classroom in one of the city's oldest schools in one of its poorest neighborhoods. It had been an atypical choice for a young woman who had grown up in the suburbs and attended top-rated schools; their gleaming buildings stockpiled with all the possibilities and potential any student could ever need. But Kerry knew, from her short stint as a student teacher in this inner-city district, many of the glossy opportunities that had been available to her as a suburban student were painfully and persistently out of reach for students here. She wanted to make a difference. Maybe, she had reasoned, she could pack up some of that possibility and bring it with her every day.

So much had changed, though, during those ten years. Schools in general, and teachers specifically, had come under constant attack from warring political ideologies that demonstrated little understanding of the realities of teaching children, especially children who were becoming poorer, more transient and less secure in all the things Maslow had defined as basic needs for survival in his famous hierarchy. Adding to the political discontent was the increasing number of parents who would publicly and aggressively criticize teachers for failing their children when, oftentimes, it was society itself that had pulled up short. Then there were the deepening challenges of the students themselves. Social and emotional skills were increasingly void in

the students she was seeing, and those deficiencies were at times playing out in aggressive behaviors that robbed other students of their education as distracted teachers managed the disruptions. The sum toll of it all was exacerbated in an inner-city school.

While third graders, in general, were optimistic cauldrons of pure human energy, Kerry had also witnessed a change in her eight-year-old charges. Some bore the scars of constant upheaval in their home lives, interfering with their ability to attach to their classmates and settle in to learn. For the past three years, her classroom transiency rate had hit 75 percent. Of the two dozen students who warmly greeted her on the first sweltering day of the new year in August, just six would still be in her classroom ten months later to hug her good-bye before scampering off on summer break. One by one, throughout the year, the other 18 students had moved somewhere else, sometimes with no warning and no forwarding address. One by one, new transient students had taken their places. Sometimes twice.

Kerry breathed in and out deeply as she surveyed the cacophony of desks before her, each a landing pad for a little human spirit. She bit her lower lip, choking back tears. She loved these students. She loved teaching. But she had made a heart-rending decision. In ten minutes she would meet with the Principal, Mark Green, and tell him she intended to resign at the end of the year; a decision she could not have fathomed just a few short months ago.

The notion she should leave teaching took up residence along the outer banks of her consciousness at the beginning of the school year when Kerry learned three of her colleagues had



quit over the summer. The notion gained a foothold and then picked up steam as a particularly tough year unfolded. Fifteen of her students had left during the year; the revolving door ushering in a new student to fill each empty seat. Two students had lost parents to drug overdoses. Her students had worked so hard to learn the mechanics of reading, writing and basic math; yet she knew many would fall short on the standardized tests she had just administered. There just hadn't been enough time to get them all ready. There was never enough time. Each tragic turn of events, as she saw them now, was mounting evidence for her self-indictment. She was failing her students. She was failing their future. They deserved better. She would go.

Kerry reached into the top drawer of her desk and retrieved the letter she had written days before, the one formalizing her decision and putting the district on notice this year would be her last. She glanced at the clock and knew she needed to head to Mark's office. She had asked for this meeting and he would be waiting for her.

Kerry walked out into the deserted hallway which, just moments earlier, had been a noisy traffic jam of students, staff and parents. The long corridor was now dark; the closed doors of the classrooms it connected denying it direct sunlight except at the very end where it met the large glass entryway heading outside to the parking lot. The late afternoon sun lit that terminus portal now with an almost ethereal light, a beacon at the end of a dark tunnel. Kerry walked toward the light and Mark's office which sat just inside the glowing doors.

As she made her way down the hall, a human figure appeared in the illuminated entrance.

The person appeared almost to be an apparition, washed in both darkness and light, sun and shadow. She wasn't even sure if it was a man or a woman until the specter came further into the hallway and the searing backlight was tempered by the dim aging florescent bulbs humming overhead. It was a young man. Probably someone's father. Probably late picking up his son or daughter.

She had almost walked by him when he spoke. "Miss Simms?" Kerry was surprised to hear her name. "Yes. And you are?"

"It's Jamal Salib, Miss Simms. You were my third-grade teacher."

Kerry was stunned. The young man standing before her bore little resemblance to the gaunt young boy who had shown up in her classroom ten years earlier, two months after school had started, struggling with English, withdrawn and frightened. It was her first year teaching. It was Jamal's first year in America as a Syrian refugee. He, his parents, and four siblings had fled

their war-torn country and had been relocated to the city by an international humanitarian organization. It might have been ten years and hundreds of students ago, but Kerry remembered her year with Jamal in vivid detail.

As any self-aware teacher will eventually admit, first year teachers have a lot to learn and much of that learning comes in the form of on-the-job training and trial and error. Colleges might produce the necessary paper credentials, but it's experience that produces effective and successful teachers. Jamal would have presented challenges to even a seasoned veteran.



Fortunately for him, Kerry was in her first year of teaching and blissfully naive, unaware that success wasn't a guarantee.

First, there was the language barrier. While the agency that sponsored their relocation was working with the entire Salib family to improve their language skills, Kerry knew it was imperative she speed up Jamal's transition from his native Arabic to English. She scoured the Internet for translation resources and began working with Jamal during recesses, lunch periods and after school to accelerate his command of the language. Fortunately, Jamal was like a human sponge, quickly soaking up every word, phrase, colloquialism and slang term he would need to master reading, the gateway to all other learning.

Kerry knew, from conversations with his mother and his community advocate, Jamal had witnessed more death and suffering in his short life than most of his new contemporaries would experience in their lifetimes. She knew she had to be patient while he adjusted to his new reality and she felt an almost maternal instinct to protect him from any other form of pain. He was, at first, quiet and withdrawn, a cautious loner. But slowly, over time, as his command of the language and his understanding of American culture grew, and his brilliant mind emerged, he blossomed right in front of her, like a sunflower turning its gape to the nourishing sun. By the end of that year, he was on pace to be one of the most competent students in her class. His early stoicism gave way to a warm and infectious confidence. The other students, as third graders are apt to do, quickly followed their emergent leader. Having no other experience with which to judge it against, Kerry merely thought she had done well by Jamal that first year. He moved on to fourth grade. She lost track of him.

“Jamal. Of course. It’s so good to see you. How are you? What are you doing here?” Kerry asked with genuine curiosity.

Jamal responded as if it should have been obvious. “Why I’m here to see you, Miss Simms.”

While he was certainly a young man now, some of the boyish charms persisted. Absent the sun-induced shroud, she could now see his piercing dark eyes and the small L-shaped scar on his forehead which she had never asked him about and the mop of inky black hair that curled haphazardly around his face.

“You’re here to see me? What can I do for you, Jamal?”

“Miss Simms, I’m graduating next month, and I just found out I will finish in the top ten of my class.”

“Jamal, that’s wonderful! I’m so proud of you!” Kerry was not surprised but genuinely thrilled that this former protégé had continued to excel.

Jamal continued. “I have a favor to ask. The district puts on a lunch for the top ten students and their families. Each student gets to invite one teacher to the lunch... the teacher who had the most impact on their success in school. Miss Simms, I would like to invite you.”

Kerry stood speechless. Emotion seized the back of her throat. Her eyes began to moisten. How could Jamal think she had the most impact on his success in school. Surely there were high school teachers who had introduced him to exciting new areas of study and engaged him in extra-curricular activities that expanded his understanding of the world and his place in it. By contrast, what had she done? Taught him the life cycle

of a tomato plant? And what would those high school teachers say when an elementary teacher showed up at an honors event. It was an unwritten rule that graduation and its associated pomp and circumstance were the sole purview of high schools. Elementary school teachers were not expected to be a part of those events, as if somehow what happened in the earlier grades was irrelevant to a student’s later success.

“Jamal, I... I don’t know what to say. I’m so honored but I honestly have to ask. Why me? We haven’t seen each other in almost ten years. Surely you’ve had other teachers who’ve made an impact on you.”

Jamal smiled. “Of course I have, Miss Simms, but if it hadn’t been for you, I’m not sure I would have made it out of grade school, much less graduate at the top of my class. It might have been a long time ago, but I remember everything from that first year like it was yesterday. You taught me how to speak English. You protected me from students who didn’t understand where

I had come from, why I looked and sounded different. You treated me with respect, expected me to do my best and you made me believe I was smart. I was so scared for so long and then I got to your classroom, Miss Simms, and it was the first time in my life I can remember feeling safe outside of my own home. You gave me hope that it would all be OK. That I would be OK.”

The tears were now running down Kerry’s cheeks. Could an eight-year-old boy really have been that self-aware? “Oh my, Jamal. Of course I’ll attend the luncheon as your guest. It will be the honor of my lifetime. Just let me know when and where.”

Jamal’s smile widened in appreciation. “Thank you, Miss Simms. I was hoping you’d say yes. I know it’s been a long time, but the things I learned from you? Well, Miss Simms, those are the forever things. I’ll never be able to thank you enough.”

Kerry could only smile and nod her head, the overwhelming rush of emotion catching her words in her throat. Forever things? She imagined he meant confidence and curiosity and work ethic and the self-agency to foster continual forward motion. Things teachers teach without literal intent or lesson plans. Things standardized tests didn’t measure.

Jamal was turning to leave. “I have to get going, though. I’m picking up my little sister from her piano lesson and then I need to study for a test. I’ll send you the official invitation with all the details.” Jamal headed back toward the luminous glow of the doorway just ahead.

“Perfect, Jamal. And thank you. You have no idea what this means to me.”



And much like he had arrived, Jamal slipped out the door into a wash of bright light.

Kerry watched his form disappear into the universe beyond the glass threshold. She bit her lower lip as the tears continued to dance down her cheeks. Jamal seemed like eons ago and just seconds before. While the staccato cadence of a school year offers teachers short-term evidence of their impact on student learning, rarely do teachers get to ponder the long game. But there it was. The long game. Jamal. Then the truth encased her like a slow embrace. Jamal had been a transient student. Jamal had harbored deep emotional scars. Jamal required extra time and attention to give him even the remotest chance of coming up even. That he excelled was not so much the miracle. The miracle was she didn't see herself as a part of it, until now. How many other students like Jamal had there been? How many other students like Jamal were yet destined for her classroom?

Kerry smiled and shook her head, acknowledging the razor thin line that often dances between the cosmos and chaos, where unexpected events experienced in the always fleeting seconds of the here and now can interrupt and redirect one's long term outlook and direction. She walked toward the same light that had just swallowed Jamal whole. As she passed his office, Mark Green saw her and stepped out into the hallway.

"Kerry? Don't we have a meeting?"

Kerry stopped and turned to face him. "I'm so sorry, Mark. If you don't mind, I'd like to cancel our meeting."

"No problem," Mark answered. "Mind if I ask what kinds of things were on your mind?"

"Why, forever things, Mark. Forever things."

And with that, Kerry followed Jamal into the light.

Mark walked back into his office, relief washing over him as he thought back to how it all started. He and Kerry began teaching at the school on the same day ten years earlier. Their friendship was born of their mutual naivete as novice teachers and their disparate personal realities. She was from the suburbs. He was from the neighborhood. She had no interest in becoming a principal. He aspired to lead. They had buoyed each other through a decade's worth of challenges and triumphs. Mark always assumed their professional partnership would last forever, or at least until they both decided to hang it up another two decades down the road.

When Kerry talked to him yesterday morning and asked to set up a meeting, he was afraid he knew why. He knew this had been a tougher than normal year for Kerry. He had watched her confidence deflate as the year's struggles mounted. He had tried to bolster her resolve, but the look in her eyes and the defeat in her voice told him he had not done enough. She had wanted to meet yesterday after school, but he already had a principals meeting scheduled at the high school and asked if it could wait till today. She had agreed.

He was running late for that meeting at the high school yesterday when, head down and moving fast, he literally ran into Jamal as he rounded a turn in the hallway. After laughing off the collision, the two recognized each other and spent a few minutes catching up. Mark was now the principal at Jamal's former grade school. Jamal would soon be graduating with top honors. Mark congratulated Jamal on his success. Jamal thanked Mark for everything he and the teachers at his former school had done to make sure he succeeded, especially his first teacher, Miss Simms.

Then the universe tilted ever so slightly in the direction of hope by offering Mark a reminder that forever can be built by harnessing the potential of each moment at hand before it evaporates into the next, casting the course of our hours, days, years.

Jamal simply said, "If there's anything I can ever do..."



About the Author

Karen McPhee fell in love with writing when her fourth-grade teacher taught her how to diagram sentences while encouraging her to think of words as paint on canvas. Her career included six years as a television news journalist and 35 years in education, during which time she served as a communications director, superintendent, education policy director and strategic planning consultant. Now retired, she lives in West Michigan with her husband Marty and enjoys traveling, hiking and photography. She's two thirds of the way through writing her first novel, which she hopes to finish sometime this decade.



Check out a column from Karen on the topic of writing and storytelling on page 17.

Staff Picks



Don't Shoot! I'm the Guitar Man by Buzzy Martin

"This is my pick for a great true story written by a Grand Rapids native. Buzzy Martin took his love of music inside San Quentin State Prison and details his experiences there with the inmates and how he worked to communicate with music. This inspiring book is also being made into a major motion picture!" – Ginny, Walker Branch

Foodie Faces by Bill and Claire Wurtzel

"This is a fun picture book depicting all sorts of foods that illustrate various feelings. I never realized how fully lettuce, tomatoes, radishes and a carrot could express boredom! At the end, kids are encouraged to build their own foodie faces."
– Susan, Plainfield Twp. Branch



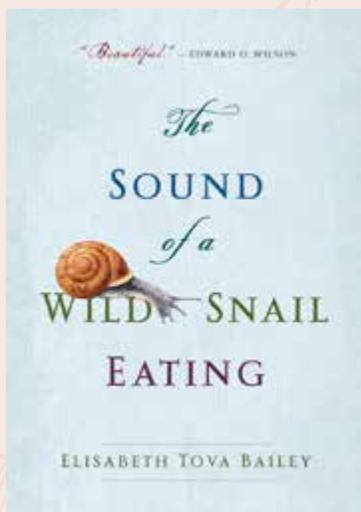
The Three Vikings by Adam Auerbach

"Three Vikings are on their way to Valhalla and must face several difficult challenges during the journey. This is a beautifully drawn picture book about celebrating our unique talents!"
– Jake, Plainfield Twp. Branch

The Snow Fell Three Graves Deep by Allan Wolf

“A harrowing retelling of the Donner Party expedition. Hunger is a poetic narrator, living each day amongst the travelers and telling its own part of the story. I didn’t want to reach the end, but I also couldn’t put it down!”

– Liz, Amy Van Andel Branch



The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating by Elisabeth Tova Bailey

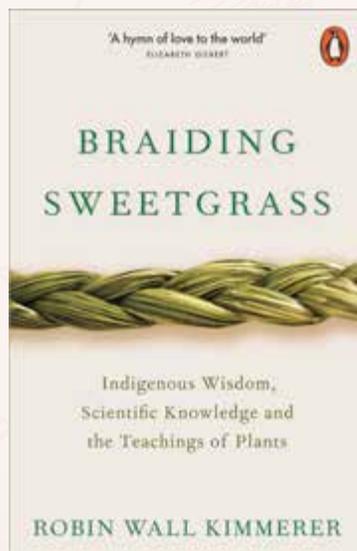
“The author recounts a time in her life when she’s bedridden due to a lingering illness. A friend who comes to visit, knowing how much Elisabeth loves the outdoors and misses her farm, digs up some violets to cheer her up. Included with the violets is a garden snail. Over the course of her recovery, Elisabeth studies the snail and its life in the potted violet. While it seems to be hardly worth noticing, the daily life of the snail helps Elisabeth recover and make some life discoveries of her own. It’s difficult to describe this book and give it the praise it deserves. Pick it up. You won’t be disappointed.”

– Laura, Plainfield Twp. Branch

Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer

“Botany, history, indigenous wisdom and spirituality... this book has it all. I loved her descriptions of the relationships between plants and humans and the information about Native American beliefs. Much to think about!”

– Marlys, Info Sub



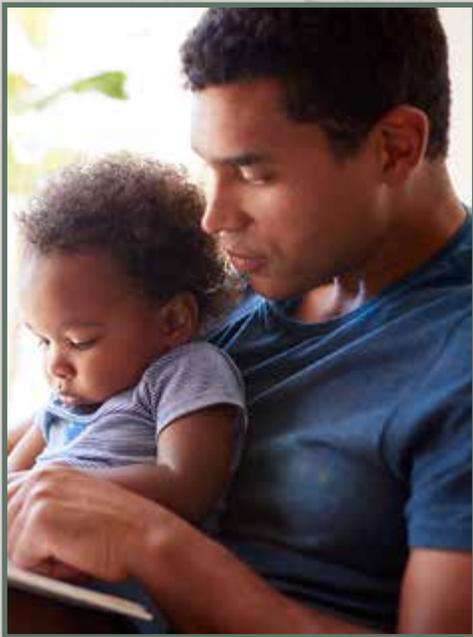
Make Time for Reading



Susan Erhardt
Branch Outreach and
Programming Specialist

I had my first baby in 1995, and I was at a loss as to how to fill the ten weeks of maternity leave I had to spend with this tiny, helpless human. I put my daughter in her bouncy seat and read her book after book after book, holding them up in a private storytime. I didn't realize until many years later the advantage those early reading marathons gave her. Studies have shown that the amount of time adults read to babies and toddlers, as well as the way they read, are big predictors of good early reading and writing skills.





Long before babies talk, they're learning. By the time a baby is one year old, they already know all the sounds needed to speak their native language. Being exposed to language at an early age has a considerable effect on the way language networks develop in the brain. A study done in 1995 by Betty Hart and Todd Risley found that during the first three years of life, some children hear 30 million more words than others. By third grade, the kids who'd heard more words had bigger vocabularies, better reading skills and higher test scores. Clearly, reading out loud is important!

How can you make sure your child hears more than 30 million words by age three? It seems difficult when you think about the things you say to your child repeatedly. "Time to eat," "let's change your diaper" and "get your coat on" aren't really going to get you there. However, reading aloud is a form of conversation and a lovely way to expose babies and toddlers to words they otherwise wouldn't hear. Caregivers don't usually use words like dozing, divvied, tromping and muffled in everyday conversation with their child, but those are all words that appear in children's picture books. Pointing to pictures, discussing characters and emotions and talking over the story together lead to even more new words.

At Kent District Library, parents are encouraged to participate with their infants in our 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten (1KB4K) reading program. The program is geared to be extremely simple and self-paced to fit within your busy life. Even if you're unable to get to the library right away, you can sign up online at kdl.org/1kb4k and print the activity sheets. It's a great way to be aware of just how much you and your child are reading together.

As Dana Suskind says in her book *Thirty Million Words*, "A word spoken to a young child is not simply a word, but a building block for that child's brain, nurturing a stable, empathetic, intelligent adult." It can be hard to schedule reading into an already chaotic day, but I hope you will make time for it. The benefits will last a lifetime!



Sunshine, Stories & Smiles



David Specht
Digital Marketing Strategist

After over a year of strictly livestreamed library programs, it's safe to say we were all ready to put down our tablets, turn off our TVs and remove our earbuds. That isn't to say that we didn't appreciate your tuning into our weekly lineup of virtual programs, but seeing your smiling faces in front of us is just so much more fulfilling than a comment on a YouTube video. Fortunately for everyone, summertime mornings in Michigan provide the perfect conditions to plop down on a picnic blanket or yoga mat and spend some time with your favorite librarian. Throughout the summer, we saw thousands of parents, guardians, teens and kiddos flock to our library branch lawns and nearby parks for a variety of Storytime programs that featured yoga, dancing, music, crafts and more. One benefit of holding our programs outdoors and at local parks is that passersby often took notice of the fun we were having and would stop by, some experiencing for the first time a taste of what their local library has to offer. And most of the time, Mother Nature was on our side, too. (Most of the time.)

So, while we appreciated your clicking the "like" button on our virtual Storytimes for those 64 weeks between March 2020 and May 2021, we much prefer to hear your comments in-person and skip the screen altogether. Because at the end of the day, the connections we experience in-person are stronger than any Wi-Fi connection we could ever have.



Fall Streaming Programs

MONDAYS

 **Elementary Graphic Novel Book Club**
Mondays, Sept. 13 & 27, Oct. 11 & 25
and Nov. 8 & 22 | 6:30 PM

If you love to read and discover new books, join us for our graphic novel book club. For selected titles and to sign up for book club meetings, visit kdl.org/events.
FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN.

Elementary Book Talks

Mondays, Sept. 20, Oct. 4 & 18 and Nov. 1, 15 & 29, 6:30 PM
Looking for your next great read? Tune in for expert recommendations from KDL youth staff. We'll tell you all about our favorite new books, including graphic novels, nonfiction, picture books, chapter books and more.
FOR SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN.

TUESDAYS

What We're Reading
Tuesdays, Sept. 7 – Nov. 30, 6:30 PM

Catch up on what your favorite KDL Librarians and special guests are currently reading. FOR ADULTS.

 **Real Grown-ups Read YA | Book Club**
Tuesdays, Sept. 21, Oct. 19 and Nov. 16, 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM
Calling all grown-ups who'd rather read books "for young adults!" There's no shame in checking out teen reads in this group.
FOR ADULTS.

Sept. 21, *The House in the Cerulean Sea* by TJ Klune
Oct. 19, *Cemetery Boys* by Aiden Thomas
Nov. 16, *Renegades* by Marissa Meyer

WEDNESDAYS

Teen Zones @ Home

Check out kdl.org/events for instructions to log in to participate in these exciting programs provided by some of your favorite KDL Teen Librarians. FOR TEENS.

Dungeons and Dragons, Wednesdays, Sept. 8, Oct. 13 and Nov. 10, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Discord Gaming, Wednesdays, Sept. 15, Oct. 20 and Nov. 17, 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

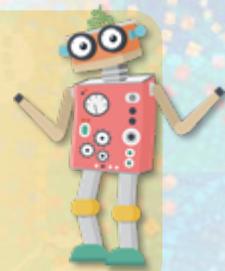
**Registration required with an email address at kdl.org/events.

 **Anti-Racism Book Club**
Wednesdays, Sept. 15, Oct. 20 and Nov. 17, 7:00 PM

This monthly virtual book club will discuss books across genres that explore issues of race in America as a means of better understanding ourselves, our history and our community. Selected titles will be listed on kdl.org/events. FOR ADULTS.

TUESDAYS, WEDNESDAYS & THURSDAYS

Wimee's Words
Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays,
Sept. 7 – Nov. 30, 4:00 PM (No program Nov. 25)
Wimee's Words sparks imagination and inspires creative thinking with interactive wordplay, songs and stories; celebrates the diversity of languages and cultures; showcases technology that invites creativity and much more! FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN.



FALL SPECIALS

What We're Learning | Home Repair Services
Wednesdays, Sept. 22, Oct. 20 and Nov. 17, 6:30 PM

Join a local presenter as they share an assortment of information, ideas and excitement, all from the comfort of your home. FOR ADULTS.



Sept. 22, Drywall Repair
Oct. 20, Plumbing Repair
Nov. 17, Get Your Home Ready for Winter

An Evening with Angela Dominguez
Thursday, Oct. 21, 6:30 PM

Spend a (virtual) evening with award-winning children's author Angela Dominguez as she talks about her work and answers your questions online. Sponsored by the Friends of the East Grand Rapids Library. FOR ALL AGES.

Sherlock Holmes Virtual Escape Room
Monday, Oct. 25, All Day

Have a fun time with Watson trying to answer all of Sherlock's riddles. Elementary, my dear Watson! Go to kdl.org/events for the program link. FOR ADULTS.



All online book clubs require pre-registration.
Visit kdl.org/events to register.

An email address is required for registration and instructions for how to join on Zoom. This program will be monitored by KDL staff and you will have the option of joining with or without video. Parents are encouraged to read book reviews of each week's chosen title in advance to determine if the book is one their child will enjoy.

kdl.org/livestream
See all programs, livestreamed
and in-person, at kdl.org/events.

KDL Teen Photo Challenge

kdl.org/teens/photo



Grab your smartphones and cameras, and get ready! Compose your best snapshots of subjects that fall into three categories:

Light and Shadow | Landscape | Food and Drink

Enter for a chance to win a \$25 Meijer gift card. You may enter any or all categories.

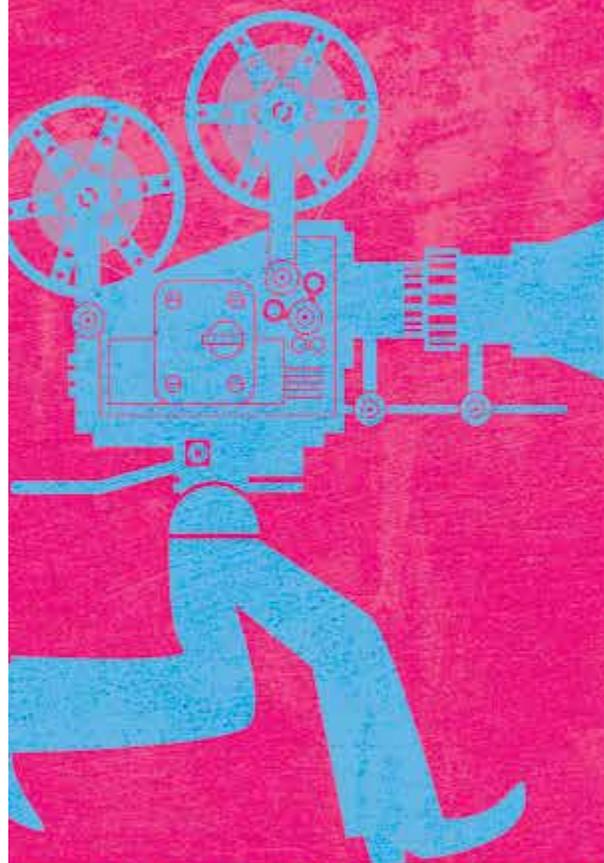
Contest opens on Sunday, October 10 and closes on Saturday, October 16.

Photos may not contain human subjects. Judges reserve the right to re-categorize any submission if deemed necessary. All photos must be taken on or after October 1, 2021.



Call for Entries
October 1, 2021
Submissions Due
January 22, 2022
Festival
February 26, 2022
10:30 AM

Celebration Cinema North
2121 Celebration Drive NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525



SPONSORS



To submit your entries and for more information, visit kdl.org/teenfilmfestival.

Allowing Change to Start in Us



Sara Proaño
Community Engagement
Manager

We live in a world divided by socioeconomic, ideological and geographical lines. One can argue that the list of dividing factors is as long as it is deep. We are often isolated without even noticing because groups of humans tend to exist in bubbles, and, if they are not aware of this, they will stay in them as long as they feel comfortable.

Feeling comfortable is great. But when we are comfortable, we tend to resist change and even fear it. The problem is that change is inevitable in life, and by resisting it and perceiving it as negative, we tend to interpret reality in a way that can feed our fear. We then justify our efforts to keep things the way we want them to be.

Change is hard, especially in a world where narratives are often difficult to discern. Nevertheless, if we allow ourselves to get to know someone else, this friendship will inform our worldview, foster empathy and sometimes change the stories we tell ourselves. When we become part of the narrative, we can see it, understand it and help write it.

The most transformational changes happen when we get to know each other!

KDL wants to be a part of transformational change. KDL staff members were invited to mentor someone from an at-risk group, someone who might be facing challenges different from the ones we face. The idea is to provide them support in reaching their goals. Staff members who have provided mentoring all agree that the benefits go both ways. I am one of them. I can tell you that my relationship with my mentee has transformed me. It has helped me see the world from the eyes of a seven-year-old child who was recently adopted out of foster care with her twin sister. Her energy, her dreams, her fears, her talents — they all resonate with me. She has changed me in ways I could not imagine. I love her, and I am honored to call her my friend.

KDL's commitment to mentoring

For the past two years, KDL has partnered with Affinity Mentoring, an amazing organization, to provide staff members with mentoring opportunities. Those who mentor are allowed one paid hour per week to meet with their mentee. Lots of KDL employees participate because they can find a time within their working hours to meet with their mentee. Having the meetings online is also convenient because staff can connect with their student regardless of restrictions or schedule changes. Since we are a library system serving many diverse communities, it is vital for us to understand and build bridges with all the groups represented in our service area. KDL is committed to this initiative and plans to open it up to other organizations providing similar services for children and adults.

If you are interested in learning more about agencies and organizations that recruit volunteers, tutors and mentees, check out:

- Affinity Mentoring (affinitymentoring.org)**
- Tree Tops Collective (treetopscollective.org)**
- Court Appointed Special Advocate (nationalcasagal.org)**



Mentees share their triumphs, challenges and hopes with their KDL mentors.

We Are All Storytellers

By **Karen McPhee** | 2020 Write Michigan Judges' Choice Winner

I'll admit I was apprehensive about entering the Write Michigan contest. What story could I tell that would be worth reading? What would reviewers and readers find interesting, relatable and good? If I didn't make it on the finalists' list, would my ego be bruised?

But we were eight months into a pandemic and there was one thing becoming clear to me as the days and the lockdowns pressed on: we simply don't know how many chances we'll get, so do now what you might not get the chance to do tomorrow. So, I started to write.

A few months later, as I read the finalists' work, I remember being stunned by the diversity in genre, voice, emotion and the sheer artistry with which each author had applied word to screen. It was like walking through an art gallery viewing works from disparate painters. Each was unique in approach and tone. It was clear; there was no one right way to impress the readers and reviewers. There was an abundant appetite and an appreciation for diverse storytelling.

Even if you've never considered yourself a writer, you are a storyteller. How do I know this? Because we are all storytellers. It's in our blood. Our ancestors carved their stories into rock. Today, we type them into computers. But, in either case, the story comes before the writing. Inside you — maybe deep inside you — is a story wanting to be told. It might be inspired by a personal experience, or a wild imagining, a dream or a nightmare. No matter what that story is, trust that it's worth telling. One word after another, write it down.

The Write Michigan rules couldn't be simpler. You must live in Michigan. 3,000 words or less. Original work. There's a rubric the reviewers use to assess your entry. It's a very helpful tool, but even I bent a few rules. By choice. More than once. (Four – nope five – times in this paragraph alone!).

In the end, it's your art. You hold the brush. They are your fingers on the keys. You are the storyteller. The world will be richer for the telling. You simply don't know how many chances you'll get. I encourage you to tell your story now.



What's your story?

- ***The 10th Annual Short Story Contest is taking place this fall!***
- ***Categories include youth, teens, adults and Spanish language (12 and younger).***
- ***Winners will be published and receive cash prizes.***

Writers of all ages are invited to enter. All entries must be submitted online between September 1 and November 30, 2021 at noon. For more information, please visit [WriteMichigan.org](https://www.write-michigan.org).

Forever Things (page 4) is the Adult Judges Choice Winner from last year. The *Write Michigan Anthology* includes this and 23 other short story winners. The anthology can be checked out from any KDL location or purchased from Schuler Books.



Introducing

Perk Pass

Guest Passes to Area Attractions

Kent District Library has partnered with area attractions to provide our patrons with access to complimentary guest passes to area museums and botanical gardens.

KDL patrons ages 18 and above can use their library card to reserve free passes to attractions and experiences around the county. Cardholders can reserve passes online, print their passes and visit their attraction on the date they reserved.

Participating organizations include:



FREDERIK MEIJER
Gardens & Sculpture Park



GRAM
GRAND RAPIDS
ART MUSEUM



GRAND RAPIDS
PUBLIC MUSEUM

More partnerships may be added over time.

kdl.org/perkpass

Got a Question?

STUMP

the Librarian



Have you ever wondered which dog breeds are most popular? How about what to do if you see a robin on the ground? You can discover the answers to these questions and more in KDL's new podcast "Stump the Librarian." Our hosts, librarians Courtnei and Emily, will research the answers to YOUR questions and discuss the fascinating answers on our bi-weekly podcast with some help from the librarian behind the screen, Jill! If you have a curious question that you would like to have answered, you can submit it by visiting:

kdl.org/stump



Emily Bantel



Courtnei Moyses



Jill Anderson

Tune in every other Wednesday for a new episode!

Introducing the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Workgroup

The **KDL Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Workgroup** was created to incorporate EDI initiatives into KDL's strategic plan. The EDI strategic plan goal is to align all library services and partnerships to be reflective and inclusive of the diverse communities we serve.

“We are dedicated to weaving equity, diversity and inclusion into the fabric of KDL culture.”



Shaunna Martz
Regional Branch Manager | EDI
Workgroup Leader

The EDI Workgroup is a group of 17 KDL employees dedicated to weaving equity, diversity and inclusion into the fabric of KDL culture. We have various backgrounds and experiences and are passionate about EDI.

Our 2021 initiatives include:

Promoting local EDI events on the KDL blog (kdl.org/EDI) and partnering with other organizations and their resources

Input on the Collection Services diversity plan for evaluating library materials to ensure offerings are reflective of the community

System-wide EDI/Cultural Intelligence (CQ) training for all KDL employees to increase staff awareness of EDI/CQ in the workplace and customer service

A monthly internal newsletter highlighting EDI book titles, training updates, local cultural celebrations and events, and KDL programs and outreach events

The EDI Workgroup will promote local cultural festivals and organizations by hosting guest blog posts and highlighting recommended books and movies.

Centennial Securities: Supporting, Investing, Empowering



Christine Mwangi
Director of Fund Development

Beyond investments, Centennial Securities has been rooted in their core value of giving back to local communities. Since its inception, the independent investment firm has made and upheld a commitment to give back to and enrich many communities, including those in which the firm has a presence, such as Grand Rapids, Chicago, Jenison and St. Joseph.

Philanthropy has been a core value of Centennial Securities and has had a lasting impact on the company culture. Centennial employees support the firm’s mission of “Supporting, Serving & Impacting Our Community.” In addition to planned giving, the company hosts several giving days throughout the year, during which employees donate funds or resources to various causes, and a Christmas tradition to identify an individual need in the community that employees can help resolve through needed funds, goods and/or resources.

Centennial Securities recognizes the power of time and hands-on outreach. To this end, employees are given 15 volunteer hours per year to give back to our community. Their tagline, “Isn’t it About Time?” solidifies that not only is time important when it comes to investing, but it is important when it comes to relationship-building as well. In addition to being a reliable philanthropic force in the community, Centennial Securities endeavors to be a relational partner.



CENTENNIAL SECURITIES
• Supporting, Serving & Impacting Our Community •



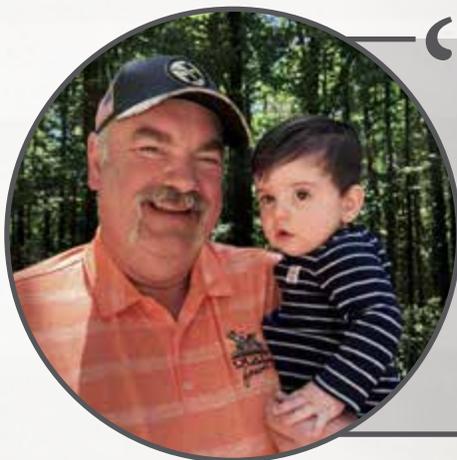
Centennial Securities contributes to over 30 local organizations, ranging from comprehensive community efforts to more specific individual needs. While this is not an exhaustive list by any means, below are a variety of community efforts that Centennial Securities supports:

- **Literacy programs like those offered at Kent District Library**
- **Basic needs for children, individuals and families, such as food security and shelter services**
- **Performing arts and music culture programming**
- **Outdoor experiences for differently-abled children who need adaptations and modifications in order to enjoy hunting and fishing**
- **Extracurricular experiences for at-risk children**

Within the firm, Centennial Securities also supports and sponsors academic and athletic opportunities for employees' children, and they graciously match any individual giving that employees make to non-profit organizations of their choice.



This past July, the Centennial Securities team visited Kids' Food Basket to pack over 400 healthy meals and support their mission of nourishing children to reach their full potential.



Randy Hansen
Centennial Securities President

Centennial's goal is to help our clients be successful with their investments, but I've always felt our mission needs to extend well beyond this obvious fact. A thriving and healthy community benefits everyone, which is why Centennial encourages our team members to get involved and support the areas in which they live and work with their time, talent and contributions. In addition, Centennial continually strives to be a good civic partner by investing and empowering the residents and fellow partners of our communities.

Friends of the Library Used Book Sales

Alto Branch

Saturday, Sept. 18, 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM

Krause Memorial (Rockford) Branch

Saturday, Sept. 25, 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM

\$3 per bag sale from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Cascade Twp. Branch

Saturday, Sept. 25, 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Members-only sale from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM

Open to the public at 11:30 AM

Wyoming Branch

Friday, Oct. 8, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Saturday, Oct. 9, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Englehardt (Lowell) Branch

Saturday, Oct. 9, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Spencer Twp. Branch

Saturday, Oct. 16, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Sunday, Oct. 17, 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM

\$5 per bag sale on Sunday, Oct. 17

Nelson Twp. Branch

Thursday, Oct. 21, 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Friday, Oct. 22, 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Saturday, Oct. 23, 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

\$3 per bag sale from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM on Saturday, Oct. 23

Kentwood (Richard L. Root) Branch

Saturday, Oct. 30, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Gaines Twp. Branch

Friday, Nov. 5, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Saturday, Nov. 6, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

KDL Locations

ALPINE TOWNSHIP

5255 Alpine Ave. NW
Comstock Park, MI 49321

ALTO

6071 Linfield Ave. SE
Alto, MI 49302

AMY VAN ANDEL LIBRARY

7215 Headley St. SE
Ada, MI 49301

BOOKMOBILE

kdl.org/bookmobile

BYRON TOWNSHIP

8191 Byron Center Ave. SW
Byron Center, MI 49315

CALEDONIA TOWNSHIP

6260 92nd St. SE
Caledonia, MI 49316

CASCADE TOWNSHIP

2870 Jacksmith Ave. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

COMSTOCK PARK

3943 W. River Dr. NE
Comstock Park, MI 49321

EAST GRAND RAPIDS

746 Lakeside Dr. SE
East Grand Rapids, MI 49506

ENGLEHARDT

200 N. Monroe St.
Lowell, MI 49331

GAINES TOWNSHIP

421 68th St. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49548

GRANDVILLE

4055 Maple St. SW
Grandville, MI 49418

KELLOGGSVILLE

Kelloggsville High School
4787 Division Ave. S.
Grand Rapids, MI 49548

KENTWOOD (RICHARD L. ROOT)

4950 Breton SE
Kentwood, MI 49508

KRAUSE MEMORIAL (ROCKFORD)

140 E. Bridge St.
Rockford, MI 49341

NELSON TOWNSHIP

88 Eighth St.
Sand Lake, MI 49343

PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP

2650 5-Mile Rd. NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525

SPENCER TOWNSHIP

14960 Meddler Ave.
Gowen, MI 49326

TYRONE TOWNSHIP

43 S. Main St.
Kent City, MI 49330

WALKER

4293 Remembrance Rd. NW
Walker, MI 49534

WYOMING AND KDL TALKING BOOK & BRAILLE CENTER

3350 Michael Ave. SW
Wyoming, MI 49509

KDL SERVICE AND MEETING CENTER

814 West River Center Dr. NE
Comstock Park, MI 49321



kdl.org/locations

Scan with your smart phone camera for branch hours and additional information about our 20 locations.

616-784-2007

Toll-free: 1-877-243-2466 | kdl.org

Welcome to KDL

Rebecca Avella

Assistant Branch Librarian, Wyoming

Recommends: *My Brilliant Friend*
by Elena Ferrante



Kate Cousins

Assistant Branch Librarian, Cascade Twp.

Recommends: The *Harry Potter* Series
by J.K. Rowling



Will McAfee

Assistant Branch Librarian, Englehardt

Recommends: *All The King's Men*
by Robert Penn Warren



Emily Assenmacher

Assistant Branch Librarian, Krause Memorial

Sandy Feutz

Shelver, Plainfield Twp.



Janice Greer

Administrative Assistant – Engagement

Recommends: The *Narnia* Series
by C. S. Lewis



Lulu Brown

Regional Manager,
Cascade Twp./Caledonia Twp.

Recommends: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*
by Maya Angelou



Martha Lin

Shelver, Wyoming

Recommends: *The Love Story of Missy Carmichael*
by Beth Morrey

Ian Irish

Shelver, Plainfield Twp.

Maddie Kogler

Shelver, Wyoming

Rachel Minor

Shelver, Wyoming

Mabel Uhl

Shelver, Wyoming

Did You Know?



In June 2019, Kent District Library became a **fine-free library**. You know what that means – **no more overdue fines!**

Write. Vote. Win.



Open to writers of all ages, with separate categories for youth, teens, adults and Spanish language (12 and younger). Don't miss out on this great opportunity to win \$500 and get published. Visit writemichigan.org for additional information.

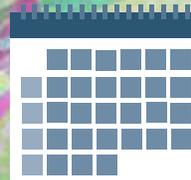
Free for those 17 and younger
\$10 entry fee for adults

Submissions accepted September 1 - November 30 at noon.

In partnership with
**SCHULER
BOOKS**



**HANCOCK SCHOOL
PUBLIC LIBRARY**



See all new events
and programs at
kdl.org/events