



Remember, Inspire and Celebrate the Gift of Reading...

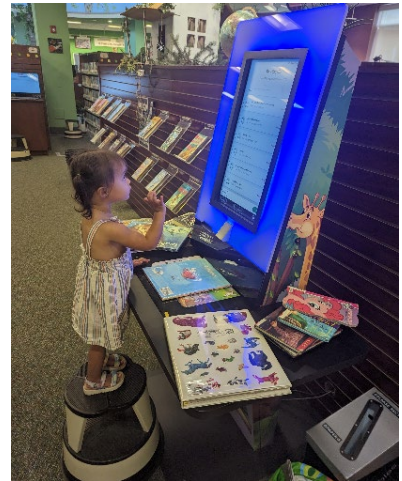
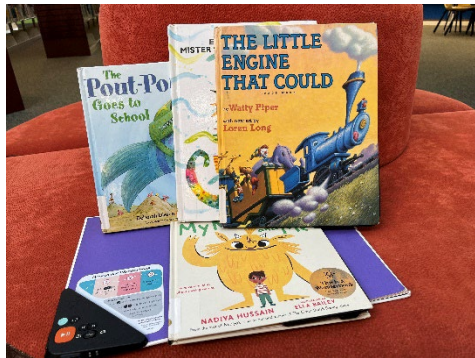
Dr. Richard Christoph (“Dr.C” as he was affectionately known) was the local pediatrician for 18 years, having established Front Royal Pediatrics, P.C. in 1999 to provide care in an underserved rural area, after retiring from a faculty position at the University of Virginia. During those years, he cared for thousands of children in Front Royal, Warren County and the surrounding region.

Reading to children and teaching children to read were always a priority for Dr. Christoph, and he encouraged parents to do so at each well-child visit. Front Royal Pediatrics maintained bookcases in the waiting area and in each of the exam rooms. Children were motivated to read and many took books home. The office was kept well-stocked with children’s books and parents were inspired to take their children to Samuels Library as well.

One of Dr. Christoph’s favorite books was *The Little Engine That Could* by Watty Piper, a family favorite. The Little Blue Engine’s life lessons of determination and kindness are timeless, as important now as in 1930 when this wonderful little book was published.

Dr. Christoph passed away in January of 2023 but his dedication and commitment to the children of Warren County and his love for both books and trains is being remembered at Samuels Public Library this year by friends and family.

A grant was made in his honor to purchase a special self-checkout for the children complete with wild animals and woodland creatures. In the Children’s Garden of the Library, a memorial plaque sits by a bench, a gift from the staff of Front Royal Pediatrics, awaiting a quiet moment of reading in the sunshine amid the flowers.



And, thanks to the family’s donation, new Wonder Books will soon arrive at the Library just in time for the Winter Reading Program set to begin on January 3, 2024.

Keeping in the Community spirit, Samuels Library received a grant from the Community Foundation of the Northern Shenandoah Valley through the Cochran Family Youth Fund to support the 2024 Children’s Winter Reading Club.

The Winter Reading Club is an 8-week program providing area children with exceptional reading resources and goals, coupled with themes, activities and fun and educational incentives to help kids continue building their reading skills



through the long winter weeks often synonymous with winter weather closures and multiple holiday breaks.

We know that continuously building reading skills is important for children, youth and teens, and any gap in reading, even for just a few weeks, can impact a young person's reading level and set it back. Last year, Samuels Library registered 958 readers who read a total of 11,318 books, a 60% increase in total books read over the 2022 Winter Reading Club.

We are grateful to our community and reminded of what it takes to inspire the children of Warren County to pick up a book and travel to faraway places, spark their imagination, and develop a love for reading. One of Dr. C's favorite sayings was "the greatest gift is teaching a child to read."

Together with the Cochran Family Youth Fund and in memory of Dr. Christoph, all of us at Samuels Public Library look forward to a wonderful winter filled with books for both children and adults. Signing up is easy!

