

Libraries Provide!

Meet the people behind the Stanfield and Echo libraries

By Heather Estrada

For Go! Magazine

STANFIELD — Libraries in 2023 are not the same libraries your grandparents, or even your parents, used to visit.

As recently as 30 years ago libraries were rated by the number of books, magazines and reference volumes. Today, books are only the tip of the iceberg of library offerings. Libraries are safe, public places where anyone can get books, yes, but also free high speed internet access, tax forms, access to expensive databases for research, craft time for kids, story times for children, and above all, a place to feel welcome.

The above description of today's libraries is embodied in Cecili Longhorn, the library director at Stanfield Public Library. Every day she is working to make her library a place where anyone can try anything, for free. She strives to make the library the heart and soul of Stanfield, and she is succeeding! In her words, "The library is a place that is accepting and open to all people. We want everyone to feel welcome, and we are always looking for new ideas."

This is happening in Stanfield. Does your teddy bear want to have a sleepover of their own? Stanfield Public Library had one for them (they even had pizza).

Inclusive story time for kids who struggle in public places — check that off the list. Stanfield offers this every Tuesday and Friday at 10 a.m.

Club, Lego Club and Game Day on Wednesday at 4 p.m.

For the 18+ crowd she has a Left/Right/Center game night for adults once a month. The next is May 15 at 6 p.m.

She'll also hire a teen intern (or two) again this summer. She's hiring now if your teens are looking for a great summer job where they'll never be bored!

Longhorn was an "accidental librarian." She started as a volunteer 22 years ago so her own kid would have an awesome summer reading program and she's never looked back. She's been the director for 13 years. She's stayed in libraries because she likes to serve people and her community.

"There are so many opportunities to help, to find answers and to make people the priority," she said.

She never stops looking for ways to make her library better and her excitement has spread to Echo.

When Echo went looking for someone to staff their library in 2019, Longhorn encouraged Anna Lemmon to apply.

Echo and Stanfield share many things — high school sports teams and students for their schools. The libraries are no exception. Echo and Stanfield libraries help each other out, covering when staffing is short and sharing ideas. Lemmon loves working in the Echo library because of her love of books and because "it's different every day."

Lemmon also will welcome a teen intern to help in the summer months when patrons (specifically kids) are plentiful, but staff time is never enough. She wants her community

the library often uses for programs), while the library is nestled into much of the downstairs along with the city recorder and city manager offices.

Echo's city manager, Dave Slaght, is the official library director, and provides oversight and manpower to many programs.

This weekend, April 28-29, the Echo library will have a book sale at the VFW hall from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Each Friday at 2 p.m. Echo hosts a craft project, which next month will center around pots, flowers and mothers.

Echo has a thriving adult book club, with the next meeting at 2 p.m. on May 10 to discuss "Atlas of the Heart" by Brené Brown.

Both the Echo and Stanfield libraries are staffed by those who love books, but more importantly, love people. Staff members who strive day in and day out to create a place of welcome and belonging. If you live in these communities, or even if you don't, a trip to one of these special buildings will be a trip worth making.

Echo and Stanfield libraries are two of the 12 fantastic libraries in Umatilla County. For more information, visit your local library or www.ucslid.org.

Longhorn created this in partnership with a Portland State University graduate student to serve kids who aren't often welcome in public places.

For grade school kids she has a rotating Comic

to know that she is working hard to bring programs and people into the Echo library, located in the historic City Hall building.

Echo's library is a beautiful old building with a gorgeous theatre upstairs (which



Cecili Longhorn