

Libraries Provide!

Meet the librarians — they're sisters — of Adams and Athena

By Heather Estrada

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When Amanda Hespel was a little girl, her favorite place to visit in her hometown was the library. It was a place that offered free activities she looked forward to, a place she felt safe, and a place that inspired a lifelong love of reading.

Today, Hespel is the library director at that same library and she is paying it forward by serving the kids in the town of Adams in the same way. Each day when the school bus drops kids in Adams, they head across the street to the library — anywhere from 10 to 25 youngsters.

Hespel lights up when she talks about the kids and teens.

“The library is more than a quiet place to sit and read,” she said. “It’s a place of education, it’s getting involved in your community, it’s helping people find what they need and don’t have. A place to find resources like Cason’s Place (for kids who are grieving), and the Dolly Parton Imagination Library (a foundation that sends kids free books from birth through age 5). Kids discover what they can do, things they never thought they could.”

Hespel is a living example of what public libraries give to the communities they serve. Libraries are a place for kids to just be — to be seen, to be taught, a safe place to grow. For her, it’s a place to give back what she was given as a child.

the road in the Athena Public Library — her sister, Stephanie Partida.

Partida has been working in libraries for four years, and is finishing up her first year as the Athena Public Library Director.

Not surprisingly, her passion for libraries echoes her sister’s. She grew up in the Adams library.

It was a place she could always count on, a place she loved going, and a place that grew her love of reading.

Partida is passionate about her library and the community of Athena. You can hear the excitement in her voice when she talks about her community and the people who come to the library. You can see it in the way she is constantly advocating for the library and working on improving it. In the last year the library has all new carpet, a new water fountain, a new printer on the way and, for the second year in a row, will host a teen intern for the summer.

You can see it in the activities happening at her library — the high school students who are sent over weekly by teachers for research and books, and the preschool children who come for story time, and the teens who bring their lunches to eat in the library.

Story time is every Tuesday at 10:30 a.m., and craft time is Thursdays at 3:30 p.m. An adult book club meets on the fourth Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. (this month they are reading “The Measure” by Nikki Erlick). On

and for the people who live in them.

The Adams and Athena libraries are two of the 12 libraries that make up the Umatilla County Special Library District. Each of these libraries have exceptional directors and staff striving to meet the needs of their communities. Look for the special happenings at two more of the district libraries in next month’s Go! Eastern Oregon.

— Heather Estrada is the district director of the Umatilla County Special Library District. Reach her at director@ucslid.org.



Hespel



Partida



Estrada

In April, you can see Hespel and her library in action all around the community. On April 6 there is an Easter basket craft in the library from 3-5 p.m., and on April 8 she will give a free book to every kid who comes to the community Easter Egg hunt at the city park at 10 a.m. On April 15, The Adam's Friends Association (and Hespel) will be serving pancakes at the Adam's Day breakfast. And every Wednesday there is a story time at 10:30 a.m. in the library.

As she is celebrating her first year at the Adams library, it's a fun side note to know that another inspiration can be found just down

April 6, check out the Easter Egg hunt inside the library.

Hespel and Partida embody the spirit of public libraries. They are homegrown library directors whose lives were greatly influenced by the librarians in their past, and who now are passionate about serving all in their communities — from the very young to the very old. To those looking for information, and those seeking a place to belong.

If you've ever wondered why communities need libraries, you will find your answer by taking a trip to these two small town libraries and experiencing what libraries are meant to do for their communities