September is National Library Card Sign-up month, which is perfect since school is back in session and a library card is as essential as any No. 2 pencil on your school supply list.

Did you know that any student attending Peoria Public Schools, even those residing outside the library’s district, are eligible for a student library card, valid Aug. 15 to Aug. 14 of the next year. All teachers at Peoria’s public and parochial schools and Dunlap schools can also obtain a special Peoria Public Library card, valid Aug. 1-July 31, for classroom purposes only.

Beyond books, your library card is also your key to our vast resources, including our online research and tutorial databases, which offer online homework help, test prep and skill-building services. Visit our website at www.peoriapubliclibrary.org for details on how to get your very own library card.
OUT AND ABOUT

Peoria Public Library’s staff is small, but mighty.
We have five locations and a Bookmobile staffed by 72 full-time, 7 part-time and 14 student pages. Any day of the week, at least three of our locations are open. We also averaged 1,800 visitors a day at our multiple locations, issued more than 8,000 library cards and hosted more than 1,300 programs in 2018. All this, and we still find time to be Out and About in the community, promoting literacy and education.

LEFT: Katy Bauml from Lakeview Branch reads at OSF Children’s Hospital’s Almost Home.
ABOVE: Alyce Jackson, Manager of Programming (pictured) and Jennifer Davis, Manager of Public Relations, handed out library card applications at the recent BackPack Peoria at the Dream Center. More than 1,800 people attended the July 27 event.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

GENEALOGY DAY
SATURDAY, SEPT. 28
MAIN LIBRARY
Genealogy Day 9:45 AM - 3:30 PM
Join us for Genealogy Day 2019!
Peoria County Genealogical Society and Peoria Public Library will host a full day of workshops on some of the latest genealogical tools and websites, show you what local history sources are available and more.
Free and open to the public.

NASTY WEATHER
WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 4
NORTH BRANCH
Extreme Weather History 1:00-2:00 PM
Ed Shimon, Lead Meteorologist for the National Weather Service in Lincoln, talks about Central Illinois’ extreme weather.

SCARY SWITCH-UP
SUNDAY, SEPT. 29 - FRIDAY, OCT. 4
LAKEVIEW BRANCH
Halloween Costume Exchange: Drop-Off
Drop off last year’s costumes the last week of September, then return Oct. 5-6 to choose new-to-you ones.
SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER • ALL LOCATIONS
Show Your Card! Weekly Prize Drawings
September is Library Card Sign-Up Month. Now is your chance to be rewarded for having your ticket to adventure! Stop by the information desk at any Peoria Public Library location each week of September, show off your library card (or get signed up for a new card), and be entered into the weekly drawings. You’ll have 4 chances to win, so be sure to stop in at your favorite location each week to get entered! Winners will be announced on social media.

SEPTEMBER • ALL LOCATIONS
1000 Books Before Kindergarten
Read any 1,000 books to your child before they enter kindergarten and earn prizes for every 100 books they read. Once your child reads 1,000 books, they will be invited to a graduation party.

SEPTEMBER
LAKEVIEW BRANCH & MCCLURE BRANCH
Reading Challenges
Select the challenges that you want to take part in during 2019. Bring in a copy of your completed challenge to receive a bookmark and an entry into a drawing for a $25 Barnes and Noble gift card.

SEPTEMBER • LAKEVIEW BRANCH
One-On-One Resume Writing Assistance Program
Do you have a copy of your resume on hand and need someone to look over it? Or are you having a hard time writing your resume? Please call Fran at 309-497-2200 to schedule a one hour session to help you with your resume.

SEPTEMBER • LAKEVIEW BRANCH
Butterflies in the Library
Come watch the life cycle of the Painted Lady Butterfly. A butterfly habitat will be on display at the Information Desk. When the time comes, we’ll announce a butterfly release and send our friends on their way!

SEPTEMBER • MCCLURE BRANCH
National Coffee Day Contest
Celebrate National Coffee Day all month by helping us figure out the best local coffee shop! Vote for your favorite place during September to enter the drawing. The winner will get a $10 gift card to the shop they vote for, and we’ll share the voting results so everyone knows how their favorite measures up.

SEPTEMBER • MAIN LIBRARY
Crafts-to-Go – 9:00 am-6:00 pm
In a hurry? Can’t stay and craft? Get your crafts to go. Kids ages 5 through 12 can pick up a craft packet at the 1st Floor Information Desk any time we’re open. Ask for a Craft-to-Go, take it home, and the fun begins.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 10, 17 & 24
LAKEVIEW BRANCH
Toddler Tales – 10:15-10:45 am
Ages 2 to 4.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3
LAKEVIEW BRANCH
Bibliophiles Book Club – 1:30-2:30 pm
This month: Sing, Unburied, Sing by Jesmyn Ward

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3
LINCOLN BRANCH
Front & Center: The M&M Game
4:30-5:30 pm
Come enjoy this fun activity to start the school year. Each student will get a mini-bag of M&Ms and draw different colors to tell tales about themselves. Children of all ages.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3
LAKEVIEW BRANCH
Board in the Library – 6:00-7:45 pm
Bring a friend or meet a new friend while playing a board or card game. Select one from our collection or feel free to bring one of your own. Soft drinks will be available. Ages 18 and up.

SEPTEMBER 4-28
MAIN LIBRARY GALLERY
Luminosity: Woodcut Prints by Cathie Crawford
Come experience reduction woodcut prints, woodcut monoprints, and Mokulitos (lithography on wood) by artist Cathie Crawford. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, September 7 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 11, 18, 25
LAKEVIEW BRANCH – 10:15-10:45 AM
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 16, 23 & 30
NORTH BRANCH – 10:30-11:00 AM
Tiny Tots Storytime
Ages 12 to 25 months.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4
NORTH BRANCH
Weather and What It Means for You: Extreme Weather History – 1:00-2:00 pm
Do you remember the winter of ’79? How about the summer of ’36? Join us as Ed Shimmon, Lead Meteorologist for the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Lincoln, talks about the extreme weather history of central Illinois.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 11, 18, 25
NORTH BRANCH
Brainy Baby Storytime – 1:30-2:00 pm
Develop your baby’s pre-literacy skills with books, songs, rhymes and finger plays that will help them understand new concepts and enhance their love of learning. Caregivers will be encouraged to engage their child through one-on-one interactions, making reading time fun. Age 0-23 months.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4
NORTH BRANCH
The DNA Discussion
6:30-7:30 pm
Take this opportunity to learn about how technology is a driving force in uncovering more about the past. Find out about the various top companies and the differences in their testing structures and reports. Hear more about what you can do with your results once they return. Discover more about YOU.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 12, 19 & 26
MCCLURE BRANCH
Fun Time Storytime – 10:00-10:30 am
Ages 3 to 6.
**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 12, 19 & 26**

**NORTH BRANCH**

A-Z Storytime - 10:30-11:00 am

We’re learning the alphabet! Join us for letter-themed stories, songs, and crafts as we focus on learning the shapes of letters and the sounds they make! Ages 2 to 3.

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5**

**LINCOLN BRANCH**

Front & Center: Apple Paper Plate Lac- ing - 4:00-5:00 pm

Join us as we create festive apples of paper plates and yarn! Ages 5 to 10.

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5**

**LINCOLN BRANCH**

Upside Down Lego Build - 4:00-5:00 pm

In this Lego challenge, you can build whatever you want, but instead of being on the floor, you’ll be building the structures above your heads. Ages 11 to 15.

**SEPTEMBER 6-8**

**NORTH BRANCH**

Blind Date with a Book
September 6 is National Read a Book Day. Celebrate all weekend by checking out a wrapped book from our display and taking it home to enjoy!

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6**

**LAKEVIEW BRANCH**

Toddler Art – 10:15-11:00 am

Let your child explore the world of colors and shapes while learning fine motor skills along the way. Dress for a mess.

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6**

**MCCLURE BRANCH**

Busy Bees Storytime – 10:30-11:00 am

Children of all ages.

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6**

**LAKEVIEW BRANCH**

Drop In: LEGO Builders Club- 3:00-5:00pm

Drop in any time to play. Parental supervision is required.

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6**

**LINCOLN BRANCH**

Earthquake Towers – 3:45-4:45 pm

We are building towers that can withstand whatever “earthquake” we throw at them. Built out of marshmallows, toothpicks, and cardstock, our towers may shake but they won’t fall! Ages 5 to 10.

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 14, 21 & 28**

**NORTH BRANCH**

Busier Bees Storytime – 10:30-11:00 am

Children of all ages.

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7**

**MCCLURE BRANCH**

Grandparents’ Day Gift Making

3:00-4:00 pm

Come make the perfect gift for the special person you call a grandparent!

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8**

**LAKEVIEW BRANCH**

Sensory Friendly Family Film –

2:00-4:00 pm

Join us for this sensory friendly showing of *The Jungle Book* (2016). The room will be lighter, the volume will be lower, and audience members will be welcome to move around, talk, and sing. The intended audience is children with special needs accompanied by siblings and caregivers, although everyone is welcome to attend. Noise canceling ear muffs and fidgets will be supplied. Rated PG

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8**

**NORTH BRANCH**

Biography and Nonfiction Book Club – 3:00-4:30 pm

This month: *Tesla: Inventor of the Modern* by Richard Munson

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9**

**LAKEVIEW BRANCH**

Sci Fi & Fantasy Book Club-6:30-7:30pm

This month: *Street Freaks* by Terry Brooks

**SEPTEMBER 10-16**

**LAKEVIEW BRANCH**

National Coloring Day Contest

September 14th is National Coloring Day. Stop by to pick up a coloring sheet for our coloring contest. Color it at the library or bring it back by September 16 to enter our contest. One picture from each age group will win a coloring prize pack. All ages.

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 & 24**

**LINCOLN BRANCH**

Terrific Tattletale Storytime

10:00-10:30 am

Ages 3 to 6.

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10**

**MAIN LIBRARY**

Intercontinental Readers – 1:00-2:00 pm

Join members of the Friends of Clonmel in a book discussion with friends from the library in Clonmel, Ireland via video call. All are welcome to attend. This month’s book is *A Painted House* by John Grisham.

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9**

**NORTH BRANCH**

Atlantic Monthly Discussion Group

11:00 am-1:00 pm

Just read the feature article (and any other articles that interest you) of the current issue of *Atlantic Monthly* in print or on the website, theatlantic.com/magazine/. Then bring your lunch or a snack and engage in lively and intellectual discussion. Facilitators are Marge Semmens and Catriona Ritenhouse. Free and open to the public.

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9**

**NORTH BRANCH**

Storytime Lab – 2:00-2:30 pm

Join us for stories about early concepts in science, technology, engineering, art, and math followed by hands-on exploration! Ages 3-6.

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9**

**NORTH BRANCH**

Learn Something at the Library: Cooking with the Instant Pot – 6:00-7:30 pm

Thinking of buying an Instant Pot, or is yours still in the box? Come and learn what you can do with this popular kitchen appliance and taste a few favorites. Presented by Trisha Noack, enthusiastic Instant Pot user.

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9**

**LAKEVIEW BRANCH**

Terrific Tattletale Storytime

10:00-10:30 am

Ages 3 to 6.

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9**

**LAKEVIEW BRANCH**

Join members of the Friends of Clonmel in a book discussion with friends from the library in Clonmel, Ireland via video call. All are welcome to attend. This month’s book is *A Painted House* by John Grisham.
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10
LINCOLN BRANCH
Front & Center: Button Tree Art Canvas
5:00-6:00 pm
Create a beautiful canvas project full of vibrant fall-colored buttons with silhouettes of trees in the background. Ages 6 to 11.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11
NORTH BRANCH
STEAM Explorations - 4:30-5:30 pm
Discover the Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math topics that are all around us! This month we will be exploring citizen science. Weather permitting, we will be in the prairie area surrounding the library. Please wear leggings/long pants and closed-toe shoes. Ages 6 to 11.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12 & TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17
LINCOLN BRANCH
Puppet Show: “Lion and Mouse”
10:00-10:30 am
Help Lion learn the true meaning of friendship. Ages 3 to 6 years old.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14
MCCLURE BRANCH
You-Pick Flick - 3:00-5:00 pm
You picked it, now we’re playing it! Every second Saturday, you can enjoy the You-Pick Flick for the month. Be sure to cast your vote for next month’s movie while you’re here! Voting is open all month.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15
LAKEVIEW BRANCH
Book ‘Em Mystery Book Club
2:00-3:30 pm
This month: Underground Detective by Thomas Laird

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17
LAKEVIEW BRANCH
Exploring Nature: Butterflies
4:00-5:00 pm
Learn about the life cycle of butterflies as we observe the Painted Lady Butterflies. Ages 5 to 10.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17
LINCOLN BRANCH
Front & Center: National Constitution Day - 5:00-6:00 pm
Join us as we celebrate the signing of the Constitution with games and activities. Children of all ages.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15
LAKEVIEW BRANCH
 Illinois French Creole History and Culture - 2:00-3:30 pm
Beginning in 1699 with the building of villages like Cahokia and Kaskaskia, Illinois, along the Mississippi River, French colonists from Western France and Quebec would merge with the native populations of Illinois, Missouri, and Indiana to create a Creole culture that is still unique from its cousins in Louisiana and Canada even today. Well-known historian and fiddler Dennis Stroughmatt will take the listener on a fascinating trip through The Illinois Country from both a historical and modern perspective, highlighting the enduring French identity of places like Prairie du Rocher, Illinois and Old Mines, Missouri through ancient French folktales, haunting ballads, and foot-stomping fiddle tunes.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18
LAKEVIEW BRANCH
KAB: Kids Advisory Board - 4:30-5:30 pm
Join us for our monthly meeting to give your opinion on events and materials at Lakeview Branch. Ages 8 to 12.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19
THIRD THURSDAY FILM FEST: A YEAR OF MUSICALS - 2:00-4:00 pm
Join us on the third Thursday of each month for a musical! We will have some classics as well as some newer films. Bring a snack and enjoy a movie on the big screen. Free and open to all ages. This month: Grease (PG, 1978)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19
MCCLURE BRANCH
Get Ready! National Preparedness Month - 3:00-4:00 pm
Be prepared when disaster strikes! Learn more about how to keep yourself and loved ones safe in the event of an emergency and start making your home emergency kit. Please register by calling 309-497-2700 or emailing programmingdept@ppl.peoria.lib.il.us by September 18 so that we can ensure adequate emergency kit supplies. For families of all ages!

SEPTEMBER 22-28
LAKEVIEW BRANCH
Banned Books Week Display
Come check out the banned books display to see the top 11 most challenged books of 2018.
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23
MCCLURE BRANCH
Monday Morning Movie Series
10:30 am-12:30 pm
Enjoy a classic movie with popcorn! This week: Casablanca with Humphrey Bogart (1942)

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23
LINCOLN BRANCH
Button Bowls - 4:00-5:00 pm
Sometimes extraordinary crafts can come from the most ordinary things, as is the case with the button bowls that we are making. With just a balloon, buttons, and glue, we are out to show you how everyday things can become something more if you simply put your mind to it! Ages 11-18.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24
LINCOLN BRANCH
Front & Center: Minute to Win It! - 5:00-6:00 pm
Learn the skill of team building playing Minute to Win It! Put together a 48 piece floor puzzle, build a tower with Jenga pieces or see who can devour a dirt pie in a minute or less!

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24
LINCOLN BRANCH
Read On Book Club – 5:30-7:00 pm
This month: The Family Business 5: A Family Business Novel by Carl Weber & La Jill Hunt

TUESDAY, SEPT. 24
LAKEVIEW BRANCH
Peoria Speaks with the Peoria Park District – 6:00-7:30 pm
Peoria Speaks is a community discussion program which focuses on topics of interest to Peorians. Funding for Peoria Speaks is provided by Illinois Humanities through their Illinois Speaks program which is aimed at strengthening the democratic process through community dialogues across the state of Illinois. This month, Brent Wheeler, Deputy Director of the Peoria Park District, will provide background information about the mission, services, and programs offered by this vital community organization and talk about the importance and benefits of public parks. The floor will then be open for questions and discussion. Free and open to the public.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25
NORTH BRANCH
Comic Corps Club - 5:00-6:00 pm
Have a love of comics or manga? Participants are encouraged to share any comic or manga featuring their favorite hero. Ages 13 to 18.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25
MCCLURE BRANCH
About the Artist - 5:00-6:00 pm
Learn about celebrated artists and find inspiration to make your own art. September's artist is Georgia O'Keeffe. Ages 6-11.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26
LINCOLN BRANCH
Hydrophobic Sand - 4:15-5:15 pm
We will make our own hydrophobic sand, which not only stays dry in water but is fun to play with as well! Ages 5 to 10.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26
MCCLURE BRANCH
Adulting 101: FAFSA and Financial Aid – 5:00-5:45 pm
Frantic about the FAFSA and college financial aid? Join us to learn your options and get your questions answered by ISAC financial aid expert, Emily Blankenship.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26
NORTH BRANCH
Sherlock Holmes Story Society - 6:30-7:30 pm
Whether you’ve read the classic Sherlock Holmes stories a million times or none at all, all are welcome to experience The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes in this reading discussion group. Each month, we’ll tackle another short story. Like our hero bid his loyal companion over one hundred years ago, we invite you to “Come at once if convenient - if inconvenient come all the same”! This month: “The Adventure of the Three Students.”

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27
LINCOLN BRANCH
Hispanic Heritage Month: Color TV – 3:45-4:45 pm
In honor of Hispanic Heritage month, we will be learning about the famous Mexican engineer Guillermo González Camarena who invented the Color TV! To honor him, we will be creating our own color “TV” with common items from around the house. Ages 11 to 18.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28
MCCLURE BRANCH
Medicare 101 – 9:30-11:00 am
This informational presentation is ideal for anyone desiring up-to-date information on Medicare Parts A, B, C, and D or Medicare Supplements. All are welcome, but space is limited. Preregistration is available by contacting 309-497-2700. For further information, please contact Julie Bicksler at 309-231-5371 or at bixmix7@gmail.com.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28
MAIN LIBRARY
Genealogy Day – 9:45-3:30 pm
Join us for Genealogy Day 2019! Peoria County Genealogical Society and the Peoria Public Library will be hosting a fantastic day of learning! We will have workshops on using some of the latest genealogical tools and websites, tours of the Local History section of Main Library, information from local and national heritage societies, and much more!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28
MCCLURE BRANCH
Wood Burning Basics – 2:00-4:00 pm
Learn the basics of this interesting form of art and have a chance to make a wood burning creation to take home! Please register by calling 497-2700. Ages 13+.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29
NORTH BRANCH
Music in the McKenzie Presents: Switchback - 2:00-4:00 pm
Switchback draws on traditional Celtic music and original Americana songs that reflect their Irish heritage and Midwestern roots. Playing an exciting mix of mandolin, guitar, and bass, their harmonies have won comparisons to famous duos, such as the Louvin Brothers, Everly Brothers, & Simon and Garfunkel. A portion of CD sales support The Friends of Peoria Public Library.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29-FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4
LAKEVIEW BRANCH
Halloween Costume Exchange: Drop Off
We will be collecting gently used Halloween costumes to donate for our Halloween Costume Exchange. Clean out your closets of last year’s costumes to make room for new ones this year. Come back on Saturday, October 5 or Sunday, October 6 to pick out new-to-you costumes for your family. Any remaining costumes will be donated to the Center for Prevention of Abuse. If you have questions regarding what items we will accept please contact Elise at 497-2200.
Consider stepping outside of your comfort zone and joining a book club. Or two. Not only will you make new friends and keep the old, but you may be introduced to books or genres you never would have considered on your own. New members are always welcome!

Peoria Public Library hosts the following book clubs. If you’d like to start a new one, contact us at 497-2141.

**OCTOBER BOOK CLUBS**

**THE BIBLIOPHILES BOOK CLUB**
When/Where: Meets the first Tuesday of the month from 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the Lakeview Branch of Peoria Public Library, 1137 W. Lake.
For more information, contact Nancy at 309-231-3263 or by email at nancy415@mediacombb.net
October 1: *Proof* by David Auburn

**THE BIOGRAPHY/NON-FICTION BOOK CLUB**
When/Where: Meets the second Sunday of the month from 3-4:30 p.m. at the North Branch of Peoria Public Library, 3001 W. Grand Parkway.
For more information, call Roberta Koscielski at 309-497-2186.
October 13: *Salt, A World History* by Mark Kurlanksy

**THE BOOK’EM MYSTERY BOOK CLUB**
When/Where: Meets the third Sunday of the month from 2-4 p.m. at the Lakeview Branch of Peoria Public Library, 1137 W. Lake.
For more information, call 697-2451 or 657-6450.
October 20: *Twisted Prey* by John Sanford

**THE SCIENCE FICTION/FANTASY BOOK CLUB**
When/Where: Meets on the second Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Lakeview Branch of Peoria Public Library, 1137 W. Lake.
For more information, call 497-2701.
October 14: *Hard Magic* by Larry Correia

**THE READ ON BOOK CLUB**
When/Where: Meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at 5:30 p.m. at the Lincoln Branch of Peoria Public Library, 1312 W. Lincoln Ave.
For more information, call 497-2600.
October 22: *Children of the Waters: A Novel* by Carleen Brice

**THE SHERLOCK HOLMES STORY SOCIETY**
When/Where: Meets the fourth Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the North Branch of Peoria Public Library, 3001 W. Grand Parkway.
For more information, call 497-2701.

**THE YA FOR ADULTS BOOK CLUB**
When/Where: Meets the third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Lakeview Branch of Peoria Public Library, 1137 W. Lake.
For more information, call Karla at 497-2150.
October 15: *Every Falling Star: The True Story of How I Survived and Escaped North Korea* by Sungju Lee

**IN OCTOBER**
Due to Columbus Day, the club will meet at the Calvary Baptist Church, 2200 W. Nebraska Ave., Peoria.
Peggy Miller is one of the 47,487 Peorians who have a Peoria Public Library card. And like every one of those cardholders, she has a story.

“My aunt Irene took me to the library to get a card when I was in 2nd grade. She helped me pick out a book and showed me how to check it out,” Miller recalls. “She told me I had to take very good care of the book or I could not get another. She gave me a very special bag from Carson Pirie Scott to keep the book safe. Then she showed me how to walk home.

“My household was very chaotic. She set my life on a course that would save me. The library ladies were kind, gentle and helpful. The library was a safe place.”

Miller’s aunt Irene died a year ago.

“I can’t explain how much it meant to me. (The library) was my sanctuary,” says Miller, who grew up in a small suburb south of Chicago, but now lives in Peoria.

And Miller couldn’t be prouder that her daughter grew up to become one of those “kind, gentle, helpful” ladies, a librarian who now manages Peoria Public Library’s Lakeview Branch.

Forty-one percent of Peorians have a library card, giving them access to a wealth of resources – newspapers, magazines, music, movies, research journals, local historical collections, online databases, free computers and even free passes to some museums. Oh, and books. Lots of books.

Peoria Public Library has more than 540,000 items in our collection, but we have access to any book, basically anywhere. But, as Miller proves, libraries are more than depositories of information. They are places to feel safe, to feel empowered and to be encouraged to be your best self.

As author Kurt Vonnegut once noted, “The America I love still exists at the front desks of our public libraries.”

September is National Library Card Sign-up Month. Every single resident of the city of Peoria can have a library card. If you don’t have one, please come visit one of our five locations and let us help you.