

# 2024 Impact Report

by Aron Ryan

## Writing Club

### Program Summary

- 20 Writing Club sessions. Top 3 sessions included:
  - Writing Club: Rainbow Books (6/12) – 29 writers
  - Homeschool Writing Club: Write with a Therapy Dog (12/4) – 28 writers
  - Homeschool Writing Club: Superhero Comics (9/4) – 24 writers
  - Total attendance across all Writing Club events: **309 writers**

### Feedback from Writing Club Students:

- I like this a lot. That means you're a really good teacher! (*shared in person*)
- Being part of writing club helped me tone my writing. Appreciate your initiative to help students like me! (*shared over email*)
- I really loved it and I'm coming back soon! My favorite part was when I got to make my funny zombie comic book! (*shared over Writing Club Feedback Survey*)

### Feedback from Writing Club parents:

- My son loved the books provided! He also said that his favorite club memory was during the first class! He loved the field trip around the library for the Alebrijes (*shared over Writing Club Feedback Survey*)
- I love that you make it accessible to ALL ages—coloring in a book + using your imagination is just as good as the older kids writing in depth. You are always approachable + kind! (*shared over Writing Club Feedback Survey*)
- This was our first time attending a writing club and my three children all enjoyed it. I appreciated all the quality supplies for them to enjoy while crafting their stories and art. (*shared over Writing Club Feedback Survey*)



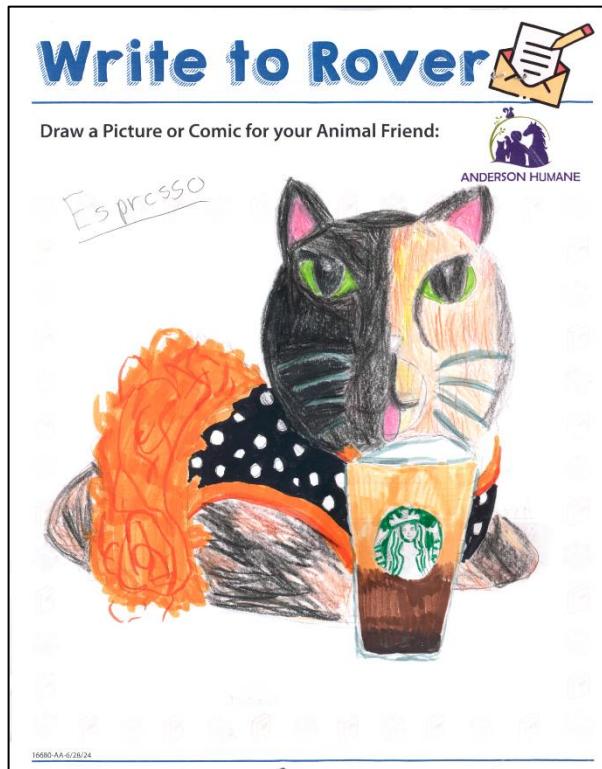
## Read to Rover

- 3 Read to Rover programs at main library (January 2024 – March 2024)



## Write to Rover

- 49 letters written to animal pen pals (summer 2024)



Dear Rocket,

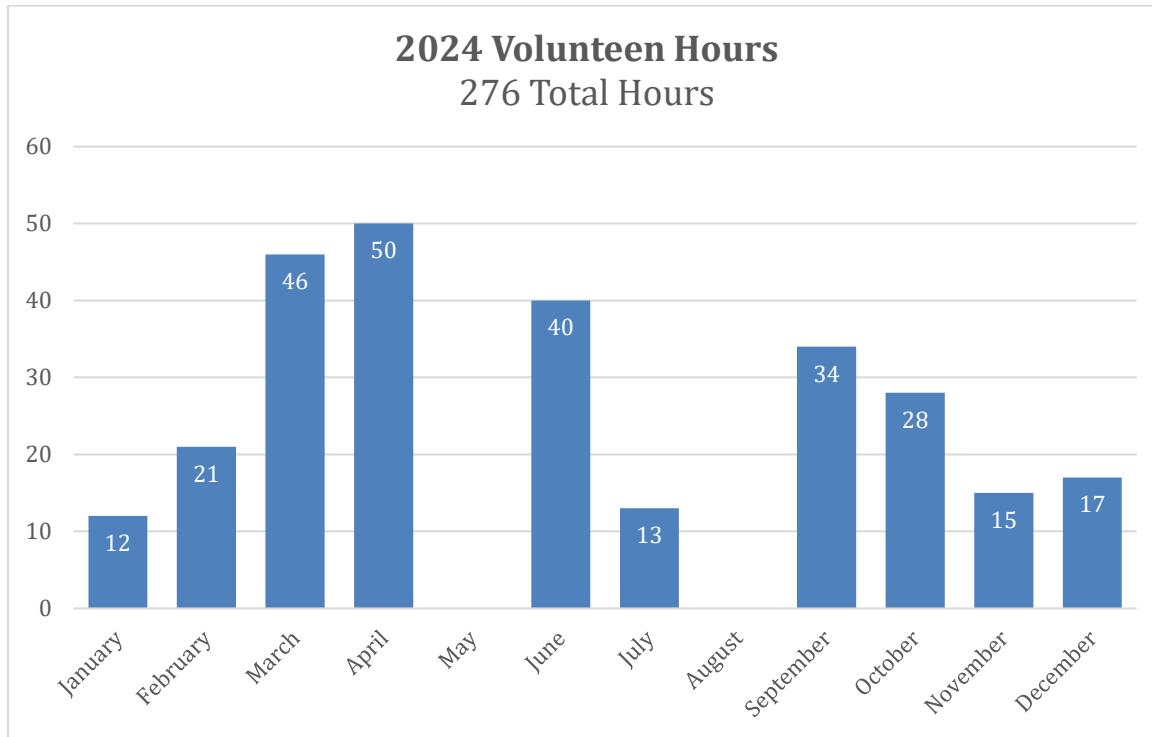
you were my friend  
since I was 6 years  
old and you are still  
my friend to this day  
Also, how old are you?  
And as I grow you  
grow and I wish that  
I can stay with but  
I have camp and now  
we're best friends and  
we haven't seen each other  
in a while so I was just saying  
hi.  
Sincerely, Marlee

Rocket and me

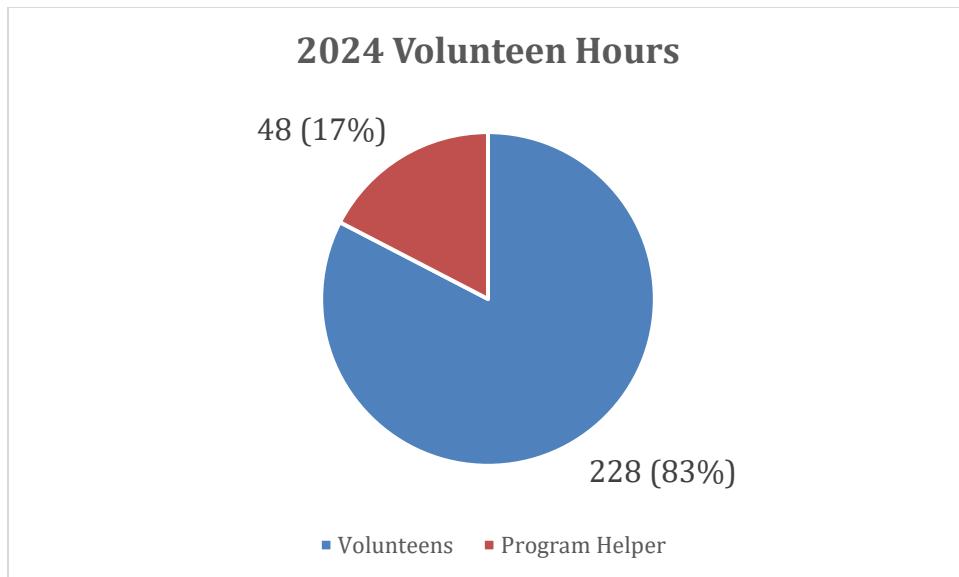


Dear Rocket, you were my friend since I was 6 years old and you are still my friend to this day. Also, how old are you? And as I grow you grow and I wish that I can stay with but I have camp and now we're best friends and we haven't seen each other in a while so I was just saying hi. Sincerely, Marlee.

## Volunteers



Month	Volunteer Hours
January	12
February	21
March	46
April	50
May	0
June	40
July	13
August	0
September	34
October	28
November	15
December	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>276</b>



Volunteer Opportunity	Volunteer Hours
Volunteers	228
Program Helper	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>276</b>

Program Helper Opportunities	Program Date	Volunteer Hours
Book Sale Set-Up	Monday September 16	6
Cardboard Challenge (2 sessions)	Friday October 11	8
Comic Book Mania	Saturday October 19	4
Halloween Boo Bash	Monday October 28	5
Kids Read Spooky Stories	Tuesday October 29	1
Mr. Freeze	Thursday January 4	1
Rakow Renaissance Faire	Saturday September 28	8
Writing Club Chalk Art	Wednesday July 10	6
Writing Club Mini Books	Wednesday June 19	2
Writing Club Rainbow Books	Wednesday June 12	4
Writing Club Superhero Comics	Wednesday September 4	3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>48</b>

Fun Stats	
Unique Volunteers	70 volunteers
Volunteer with highest # of volunteer hours	Anderson (16 hrs)
Bookmarks @ Youth Center Desk	2,500 bookmarks

## Data Insights: Comparing 2023 / 2024

Volunteer total hours reduced by 32% (404.5 hours in 2023; 276 hours in 2024).

Variables include Volunteer program cancellations due to staff shortages and reduced monthly Volunteer sessions. Reducing Volunteer sessions aligned with departmental goals of streamlining program offerings, mitigating staff burnout *and* providing quality Volunteer programs over quantity.



To provide quality volunteer opportunities, we prioritized staff outreach for Program Helper opportunities, inviting Volunteers to assist at library programs.

- 68% growth between 2023 – 2024
- 159% growth between 2022 – 2024
- *Thank you for your awesome volunteers. They were so helpful and great with our crowd!*

- GBPL team member

## Volunteer Highlights

- “I’m really glad I’m here.” –Volunteer at their first volunteer shift.
- “Today was a good day!” – Volunteer after shredding newspaper for the Anderson Humane puppy kennels
- Middle school Volunteers, high school volunteers, and adult volunteers joined forces for GBPL’s All Volunteer Event on April 30<sup>th</sup> (group photo below)



## LGBTQ+ Programming

- 2 LGBTQ+ storytimes
  - June storytime: Celebrating Pride Month
  - March storytime: Celebrating Transgender Day of Visibility
- 2 LGBTQ+ Book Clubs
  - 2 events offered as library programs. 9 events offered as Elgin Pride programs hosted at the library. 11 books read by community members.
  - Most popular session: March's LGBTQ+ Book Club. We read *The Song of Achilles* by Madeline Miller. 9 readers joined for a lively discussion.
- We read Xochitl Gonzalez's *Olga Dies Dreaming* for April. One book club member, Leo, reached out to Xochitl Gonzalez's team, sharing the book club. The author sent a [video response](#) thanking the library. Book club members have expressed their appreciation for Gail Borden Library welcoming LGBTQ+ Book Club - and now, the author has too!



Pride Month Book Display

## Display Cases

- 49 children's collections featured in display cases

### Feedback:

- Woohoo! My kids and I love Aron! He was so helpful when my daughter Dylan added her Demon Slayer collection to the display case, he did a great job of making her feel secure that her beloved collection would be taken care of and kept safe for the week. They also love the home school class he's a part of. (*shared over GBPL Facebook*)

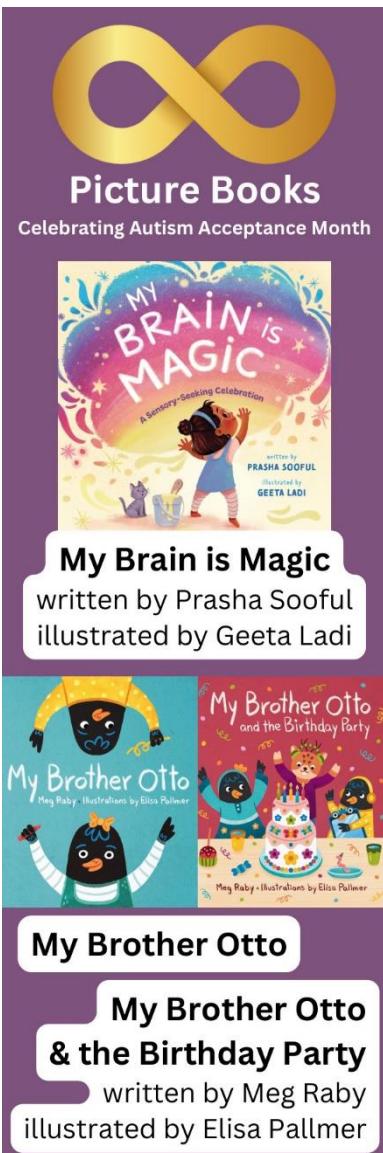


Collection Spotlight: Maggie's Artwork



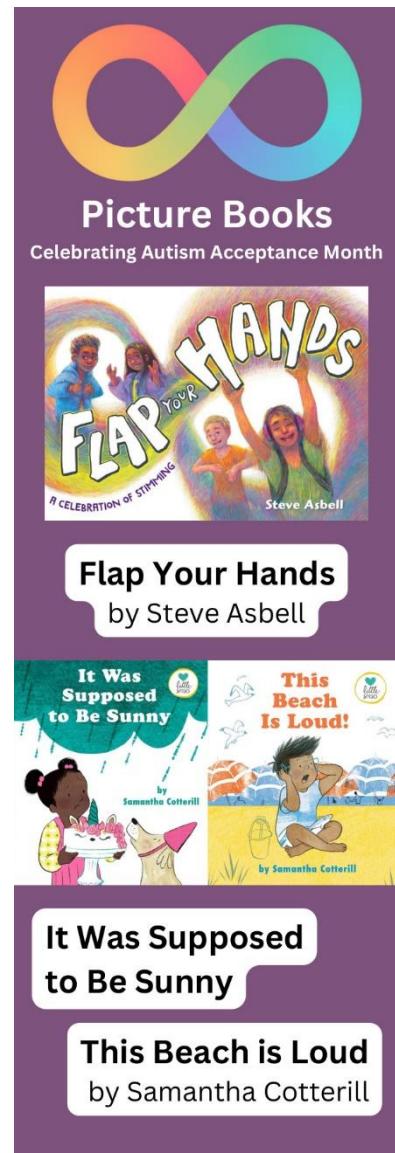
## Family Programs

- Mr. Freeze Cryogenics Show
- Cardboard Challenge
- Comic Book Mania
- Halloween Party



## 2024 Coursework

- LIS 765  
Technology for Leaders
- LIS 768  
Social Media and Emerging Technologies
- LIS 720  
Picture Books and Emergent Literacy
- MAYL 814  
Graphic Novels
- LIS 707  
Leadership, Marketing, and Strategic Communication
- LIS 708  
Evidence-based Planning, Management, and Decision Making
- Graduating  
  
May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025



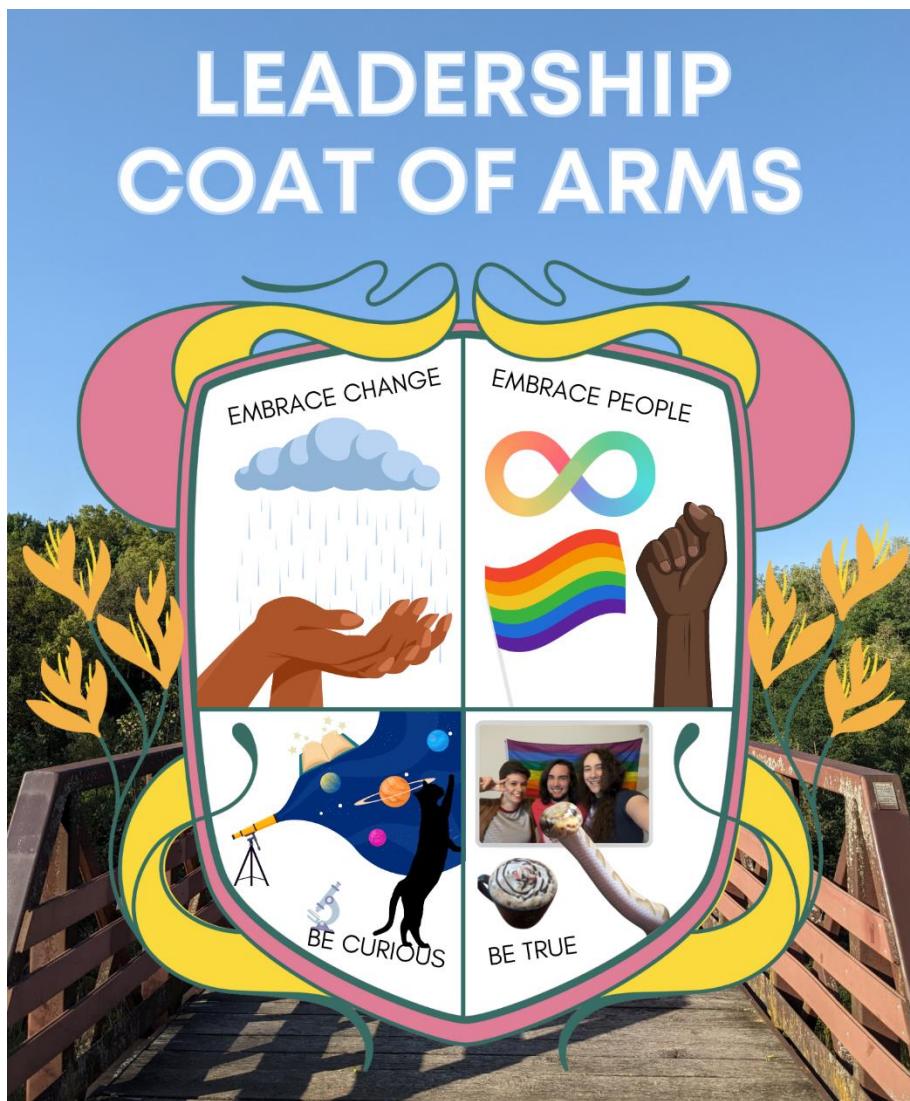
Bookmark from LIS 720: Picture Books and Emergent Literacy

## Coursework Showcase

- Social Media Handbook for Gail Borden Public Library's Tech Wizards!  
[arondanteryan.wixsite.com/gailbordentechwizard](http://arondanteryan.wixsite.com/gailbordentechwizard)



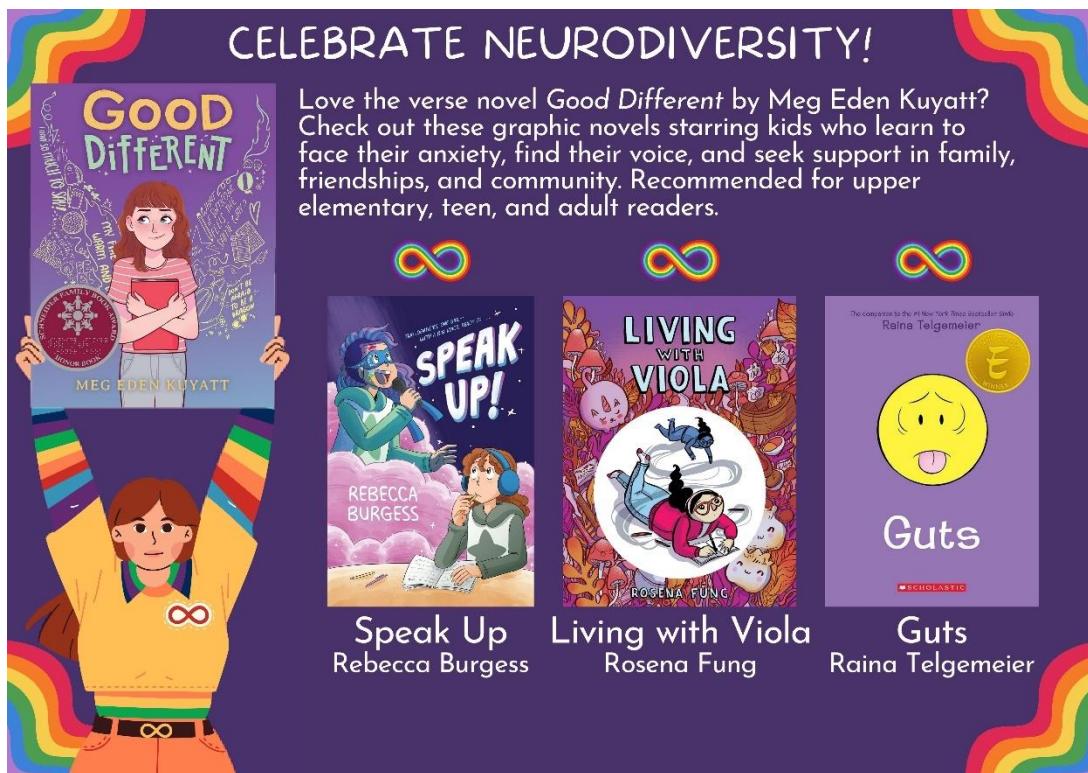
*Website from LIS 768: Social Media & Emerging Technologies*



*Leadership Coat of Arms from LIS 765: Technology for Leaders*

## CELEBRATE NEURODIVERSITY!

Love the verse novel *Good Different* by Meg Eden Kuyatt? Check out these graphic novels starring kids who learn to face their anxiety, find their voice, and seek support in family, friendships, and community. Recommended for upper elementary, teen, and adult readers.



**Good Different**  
Meg Eden Kuyatt

**Speak Up!**  
Rebecca Burgess

**Living with Viola**  
Rosena Fung

**Guts**  
Raina Telgemeier



**Frankie's World**  
Aoife Dooley

**Timid**  
Jonathan Todd

**Button Pusher**  
Tyler Page

Looking for more book recs?  
Check out our booklist by scanning the QR code:




## 2024 Poetry Performances @ Gail Borden Library

- Poet Laureate Reception (March)
- Gail Borden Public Library's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (March): *Infinities* Poetry Reading  
One staff member shared over email, *Hi Aron, I just wanted to say that I absolutely loved your poem for the 150th celebration on Tuesday! I've dabbled in poetry over the years and appreciated the overall tone and style. That took a lot of courage to get up there like that. So awesome!*
- Poetry Alive (April)
- Staff Training Day (April): *Infinities* Poetry Reading
- Rakow's Renaissance Family Faire (September): *All's Faire in Love and Libraries* Poetry Reading

### **Infinities**

Celebrating Gail Borden Library's 150th Anniversary  
by Aron Ryan

I am old

as a Galapagos tortoise.  
My shell shelters

not one, but infinite fables.  
Books as bountiful  
as stars. You cannot see every galaxy

anymore than you can read  
each story in my observatory.  
If my pages were mirrors,  
you'd see smiles tucked into open books –

a wonder unnumbered, lest it lose its wonder.  
Open a book, any book, tracing my words with your fingertip  
as gently as you'd graze the commas of tulips,  
petals curling purple, pink, peach, painting the springtime green  
between the Fox River and me.

I am home  
for art. Para *La Abuela*, alebrije exhibited  
at my exhilarating *Creatures of a*  
*Dream World*. La tortuga shelters las mariposas monarcas,  
painted butterflies perched on my dome of a home;  
may you rest your freckled wings on my speckled green shell.

I am refuge  
for every language, every book, every creature,  
home to Rocket the library turtle,  
home to painted lady butterflies taking their first flight,  
home to newborns and abuelas and readers

seeking sanctuary in my shelves. Open a book, any book, and listen  
to these pages rustling like autumn leaves in a brisk breeze,  
smelling just as sweet. Breathe in the scent of a freshly printed book  
in your favorite nook of my paradise.

I am Gail Borden Library,  
celebrating my 150th Anniversary in verse,  
yet my worth cannot be enumerated

anymore than we can count the words in this vicinity  
or the stars in a universe   expanding

infinitely...

**All's Faire in Love and Libraries**

Celebrating Gail Borden Public Library's Renaissance Family Fair  
by Aron Ryan

Hear ye! Hear ye!  
Relish the revelry at the Rakow Renaissance Faire!

Dressed with flair, our costumes are not  
a disguise to despise; they are a mirror to the magic

of our lives, reflecting our resplendent  
spirits. We are in good spirits - juggling with jesters,

dancing with dragonlings, celebrating our  
freedom to read. Dragons guard nests; libraries protect

stories. We are the wonders of fairy tales,  
born from books. Just one more chapter. One more page.

We are spellbound. We can't put the book  
down. Can't pull ourselves away from that magical land

far away. We claim this magic for ourselves,  
donning desires like a second skin. Our chivalrous attire

inspires us to be braver. Our faerie wings  
teach us to fly freer. When we are someone we are not -

be it bard or barbarian, human or dragon -  
we hear our own voice beckoning. Hear me! Hear me!

Relish the revelry at the Rakow Renaissance Faire  
and dare to be someone else

to be yourself.

To conclude this Impact Report, I'm delighted to share two poems by Writing Club students, Dweny and Diya. Their poems were written in the spirit of March's Writing Club: Happy Birthday Gail Borden Library. Both poems have since been published in the library's *Teen Writing & Art Showcase*.

### **Gail Borden Library: Memories of a Magical Place!**

by Diya Geeth

Storytime:

Sitting in a circle,  
Listening to the librarian's melodious voice,  
Soft like a blanket  
Full of warmth.  
I watch as  
Knights and Dragons  
Leap out of the story,  
And battle one another.  
Around me,  
Other kids  
Roar and pretend to sword fight, just like the characters.  
They pretend to be in Castles, Villages, and  
other fun settings.  
I bid adieu with my dragon mask.

Family Yoga:

Golden Sun rising,  
Green grass filled with morning dew.  
Morning birds calling.  
I see vibrant colors of yoga mats,  
People stretching the downwards dog pose,  
Tree pose, cobra pose  
kids balance and tumble down.  
Babies watching,  
Relaxing and calm morning.  
Water, dye, glitter,  
My shimmering lava lamp is ready.

GBPL:

My imagination goes wild in this magical place to read, be creative, and to have fun.  
So many memories to cherish forever,  
In a place where knowledge flows like a river

Dear Gail Borden Public Library,

I wrote this poem to show the incredible impact this library has had on my life.

You have been a fundamental part of my journey as a reader and writer. Thank you so much to all of the librarians who have hosted so many programs for me to grow as a learner. From StoryTime, to Writing Club, to Kids Explore, to 3D printing, these programs have taught me so many topics that have helped me be successful in and outside of school.

I hope this poem can express my gratitude to the Gail Borden Public library and its librarians, as well as every librarian who works hard to instill the love of books and learning in kids.

Here is my poem:

**GBPL: My favorite place**

by Dweny Geeth

Librarians

Kind voices,

Acting out different characters in a story.

Helping me find books,

As I walk through the different genres.

Fantasy

Mystery

Historical Fiction

Nonfiction.

Hosting programs where I

Broaden my horizons,

Walking up the

Stairs of Learning.

Kids Explore

Tie dyeing t-shirts

Dye squirting everywhere

Creating a spiral of colors

Sitting on the lawn

Laughter echoing through me

Like a light read on a Saturday afternoon.

Feeding my curiosity,

A spark igniting into a flame.

### Books

Back inside,  
I'm  
Poring over books for hours,  
Begging my parents to stay at the library  
For 5 more minutes,  
To read another book.

Characters jumping out in front of me,

I'm transported  
To worlds  
Of monsters and  
Wizards,  
Heroes and  
Villains.

Endless battles and  
Heroic Adventures.

### Writing Club

I want to tell stories like the ones I read,  
Tales with brave trios,  
Triumph of Good over Evil,  
Maybe some friendly dragons.

Inspiration flows  
From the tip of my pencil  
Onto the paper.  
A River of Thoughts,  
Rushing through my mind,  
Enveloping me with the magic  
I witness in the  
Worlds I travel to.

Volunteers

I see a sign for volunteering  
At the library,  
A way to give back  
To this community of readers and writers.  
I sign up,  
Remembering the magic of  
Stories.  
And remembering that maybe I could  
Pass some of this magic on  
To the next person.