

# WEEKENDER

## Go behind the scenes at 'A Night at the Library'

**ANNA KEZAR**

*For The Journal Gazette*

Members of the community are invited to explore the hidden treasures of the Allen County Public Library.

The Literacy Alliance and the Friends of the Library will host "A Night at the Library" from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. May 4. The after-hours event features behind-the-scenes tours, refreshments and the opportunity to learn more about supporting library initiatives.

Guests can sign up for guided tours of the Fine Book Room, the Stacks archives and the Genealogy Center.

The tour of the Genealogy Center will offer an up-close view

of the its extensive collection and advanced technology as the largest public library genealogy center in the nation.

"If the Genealogy Center is an area that people have always been curious about but just didn't know where to start, this would be an ideal way to learn about it," ACPL Executive Director Susan Baier says.



**Baier**

In the Fine Book Room, guests will have the opportunity to see a work from the mid-1600s and other famous items. The Stacks archives tour will walk attendees

through thousands of books in the library's basement - a storage area not open to the public during regular hours. Staff members will also present on how they're making the library's vast collections available digitally through online archives.

Three self-guided tour areas will be open for attendees to explore at their own pace: The Rolland Center for Lincoln Research; the Maker Lab's 3-D printing, laser cutting and sound recording equipment; and Children's Services, including the Early Literacy and Learning Center.

Staff will be stationed at each area to answer questions and guide guests through the various features of each section.

Refreshments served in the Jef-

frey R. Krull Gallery will include alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages and gluten- and dairy-free food options for those with dietary restrictions.

"We're making some conscious decisions to be intentional about having the event be open to people who might otherwise not have the opportunity to experience a fun night out with neat food and drink options," says Melinda Haines, chief executive officer of The Literacy Alliance.



**Haines**

Proceeds of the event will support the efforts of and raise aware-

**IF YOU GO**

**What:** "A Night at the Library"  
**When:** 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. May 4  
**Where:** Allen County Public Library, 900 Library Plaza  
**Tickets:** \$75; literacyalliance.org/night

ness for Friends of the Library and The Literacy Alliance. A mission of the library is to enrich the community through lifelong learning and discovery.

"The Friends of the Library is a wonderful source of funding for programs that wouldn't normally be funded by our operation budget," Baier says. "They are

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providing additional funding to let us really take our initiatives to a broader part of the community."

Initiatives include the summer literacy program, author visits, book clubs and book collections for youth who don't have access to

libraries. The funding also supports tuition reimbursement for staff certifications and training that allows staff to provide the best services for the community.

Friends of the Library board member Liz Bushnell says "A Night at the Library" will increase awareness of how the public can help the library.

"When more people real-



**Bushnell**

so many more people who want to help," she says.

ize that there are ways to give back and support the library, which does so much to serve our community, we know we will have

"A Night at the Library" also marks the continuation of a long-standing partnership between The Literacy Alliance and the library.

"At The Literacy Alliance we are all about having people learn to improve access to anything that is going to empower them to know more about their communi-

This is the alliance's

most recent event to raise awareness. It has put on "Laughs for Literacy," a comedy show fundraiser. It has also partnered with Arena Dinner Theatre to produce shows that promote literacy.

"A Night at the Library" will focus on gaining volunteers for Project Reads, a program that helps students in kindergarten to third

grade get to grade-level reading. Guests will have the opportunity to learn how they can make a difference in their community by helping a child get to grade-level reading.

"It's a nice opportunity for us to meet others who have an interest in the library and then may have an interest in both organizations," Haines says.