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Loving Lakewood

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The Lakewood Public Library is a world-class library founded in the Carnegie Tradition. Established in 1916 through a partnership between Lakewood residents and Andrew Carnegie, a Scottish-born American industrialist, businessman, and major philanthropist, the library now features a collection of over 500,000 works.

In 2005, the library unveiled a $17.8 million expansion and renovation created by Robert AM Stern Architects.

According to the library's director Kenneth Warren, roughly 40,000 square feet of space was added, and the existing buildings were seamlessly blended into the new design.

Today, residents and visitors get a sense of Lakewood from the moment they enter the doors.

"Both the Detroit and back entrance are lined with photographs that reflect various aspects of Lakewood," he said. "Visitors are then introduced to our 'new' book and magazine collection and our phenomenal children's area. The entranceway to the children's area showcases facing sculptures by David Deming that reflect the 'lake' and the 'wood,' or Lakewood."

Warren boasts about the children's area.

"We have a room dedicated to tutoring, and then there's our world-class Libranium. It's an interactive play area for newborns to five-year-olds that explores Lakewood's history, looks at healthy food choices, conveys a sense of possibility and resourcefulness, and expands a child's imagination and learning possibilities."

The children's area offers a host of activities such as Family Weekend
Wonders that blends storytelling with crafts, music, and socialization activities. The children's staff also provides outreach to Lakewood schools and day cares through book distributions and story-time activities.

On the second floor, the Library has doubled the size of its Technology Lab and now has 60 public access computers. Twenty of those are dedicated to computer education and instruction.

Guests can relax with a good book in the Grand Reading Room, which features two murals by renowned architectural muralist Richard Haus. According to Warren, they capture the essence of Lakewood's history.

The Library's quiet room provides an ideal place to engross yourself in a good book. Choose a selection from the Library's superb non-fiction collection.

"It's a long-tail collection that has incredible depth, distinction and variety," indicated Warren.

Music and video lovers will be astounded by the new Audio-Visual Room. Choose from over 200,000 movie and music DVDs or tapes. The collection is organized alphabetically so it's easy to find your favorite artist or title.

The Library also has an auditorium for special musical and theatrical presentations and lectures, as well as meeting rooms for community events and activities.

Plan on attending the Friends of the Library's Book Sale on Saturday, August 1. There will be great buys on some of the most popular titles. Book sales are held three times a year.

The Library is supported by two non-profit organizations. The Friends of the Library's goal is to sustain the institution in perpetuity, raising funds through its onsite and online book sales.

The Foundation is dedicated to raising money to enhance services and offerings. It raised $300,000 for the art that is currently showcased throughout the Library.

The Library is one of the most accessible libraries in the world, opening its doors 80 hours per week, which includes Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings.