

For Immediate Release
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National Library Week celebrates "Libraries Change Lives"

A young girl spent all her free time in an East Toledo (Ohio) branch library reading to escape from an impoverished home and the burden of caring for her mentally ill mother. Today, Gloria Steinem, well-known author and feminist, says: "I am entirely a product of libraries. You have made me what I am today."

Julia Brice and her brother Bill, of Dallas, became millionaires before the age of 30 after launching the "I Can't Believe it's Yogurt" chain. Their "trade secret": "We checked a book out of the library called 'How to Make Ice Cream' and we did it with yogurt."

A survey of some 200 physicians found that 80 percent said that information obtained from a hospital library made a difference in their decision-making: 19 percent said the information helped save a life, 49 percent said it helped to avoid tests or procedures and 33 percent said it helped avoid a hospital admission.

It happens everyday. Libraries change lives -- even save lives. For millions of people, America's libraries have been the "classroom" where they sought to better themselves.

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National Library Week celebrates/add one

Andrew Carnegie believed so strongly in the library's role as "the people's university" that he invested \$50 million of his own dollars to build them in some 1,400 communities around the turn of the century.

Librarians and library supporters across the nation will celebrate the contributions of America's libraries during National Library Week, April 18-24. Their message: "Libraries Change Lives."

"Information is power. And we librarians are in the business of empowerment," says Marilyn L. Miller, president of the 55,000-member American Library Association.

Today, there are more than 116,219 public, school, college and special libraries in the U.S., many offering an array of sophisticated information resources, such as online databases, CD-Roms and videotapes, that Carnegie could scarcely have imagined.

Their mission, however, remains unchanged: to provide the books and information resources that help people of all ages and backgrounds to live, learn and enrich their lives.

Miller noted that circulation traditionally rises during a tight economy when even more people turn to the library for assistance with career and job information as well as leisure enjoyment.

"But there are still people who don't understand what's available to them and how it can help with every day concerns like a finding a day care center, preparing a business plan or starting a low fat diet," Miller explained. "We want everyone to know we're here to help."

For more information, call or stop by your public or school library.