

# GENESEO PUBLIC LIBRARY

## *Reading Garden*

Envision yourself sitting on a park bench, surrounded by trees, shrubs and flowers on a warm, sunny day. You feel so relaxed that you close your eyes for a moment. Ahhh. It's peaceful, isn't it? There is a slight breeze blowing. When you open your eyes, you see a small group of young children being led toward you--they're looking for butterflies. They giggle and jump around a bit. They stop in their tracks when they see two butterflies land on a rock. Wait—are you at the library?

You could very well be, since the Geneseo Public Library is planning such a place. Imagine being able to check out a book and sit in a cozy spot on a sunny spring day-- just you and your book for some quiet time outdoors. Sound good? We think so!

The Geneseo Public Library's newest plan is to offer to its patrons a place where they can take some time to enjoy nature while reading a book, attending a meeting, working on a laptop or just relaxing while waiting until your child is finished in a program inside the building. Or passing the time before picking up the children at an after-school program. Or just spending time enjoying the beauty of the flowers planted there.

A black wrought-iron fence encloses the Reading Garden: it does not keep children in nor keep them out; it is to provide a boundary in which the garden is defined. Close to the fence there is a Butterfly Garden that has the kinds of plants butterflies want. In the spring, programs about caterpillars are presented. On a special day, there is a release of butterflies that have emerged from their chrysalises.

All kinds of outdoor activities for children can be experienced in this garden, from experimenting with bubbles, learning how to fly a paper kite, hunting for bugs, planting a vegetable garden or listening to a story. The list is endless.

For adults, one can listen to poetry readings, attend a book discussion, learn about types of plants that attract butterflies or sit quietly and just exist. The list goes on.

Local artists have pledged to help make this outdoor experience a thing of beauty by hand-painting child-sized benches. The Geneseo Garden Club will also assist with landscaping the garden by installing lush, green foliage and flowering plants that will show off their colors.

This is our vision for the future. We have taken the initial steps to begin the process of making it a reality by planting quality shade trees. A black wrought-iron fence encircles what will become a glorious garden. Next spring, a concrete walkway will embrace the heart of the garden. Six stately iron benches will be made available to the public to purchase as memorials to loved ones. Two comfortable rocking chairs will accommodate parents with babies or adults to relax in. A pergola to shield the visitors from the summer sun will also be constructed; the date for construction is yet to be determined. And a brick memorial walk is another possibility that might surround the seating area.

This has become a group effort, combining the helping hands of the community and their talents to make this garden pleasing to the eye and arousing the curiosity of our young patrons.

Donations have been coming in from both local businesses and patrons. A Go Fund Me account has been created for this project and is available by going to our website at <https://geneseo.lib.il.us>.

We hope those who read this will consider making a donation or donating a memorial bench in honor of a loved one. Inquiries may be directed to Claire Crawford at the library either by calling the library at 309 944-6452 or emailing her at [ccrawford@geneseo.lib.il.us](mailto:ccrawford@geneseo.lib.il.us).

