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## The Link, December 2018

University of Northern Iowa. Division of School Library Studies.

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# the link

**SCHOOL  
LIBRARY  
STUDIES**  
ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

December 2018

## Stopping the summer slide—start now!

Promoting summer reading is a year-round affair according to Megan Casey (M.A. 2017), a teacher librarian at Washington Elementary School in Mt. Vernon, Iowa. As part of her master's research project, Casey designed a research-based reading program to promote independent reading, family involvement, and public library use. Her [Defy the Odds and Read webpage](#) describes year-long projects such as the birthday book program as well as special monthly events and includes program handouts and letters to parents.



Check out February's cake auction featuring stunning book-themed creations and a celebrity judge, the public librarian. (More cake photos are available on Casey's [library webpage](#).) By the time summer rolls around, students are poised to take part in the public library's reading program—or to drop by the school library during its summer hours—and read!



## Branching out

**Lisa Beal** applied for the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) Induction Program in part to feel less isolated in her role as an elementary teacher librarian. One of ten teacher librarians selected for this **leadership development program**, Beal began her training in April and has been learning new ways to teach and advocate for the library program.

She is grateful to learn from “this fantastic group of leaders and fellow librarians from around the country.” Through interactions with her induction cohort, social media contacts throughout Iowa and the U.S., and her new teacher librarian colleagues in the Iowa City Community School District, Beal now feels the confidence and camaraderie of being part of a “team of leaders.” Beal earned her teacher librarian endorsement through UNI and was a teacher librarian in West Liberty for six years before moving to Kirkwood Elementary School in Coralville this fall.

## Browsing for books

**Joan Bessman Taylor**, associate professor of school library studies, **Andrea Hora** (M.A. 2015), and **Karla Krueger**, associate professor of school library studies, published an article on students' book selection techniques within a genrefied fiction section in a school library. The sixth-grade students observed in the study preferred to look for books with a peer—often looking at several books together—and browsed in more than one genre section.



While the students and their teachers expressed a preference for the new organizational structure and circulation increased after the new arrangement was in place, the study does not draw conclusions about whether a genrefied library is better for students.

“The main thing is to help people find the books that will give them the reading experiences that they want,” explained Taylor. “Genre and genrefication are just

a couple of many tools for helping students find what they want.” The article “**Self-selecting Books in a Children's Fiction Collection Arranged by Genre**” was published in the *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* in December 2017 and is partly based on research Andrea Hora conducted as part of her master's research paper. Hora is currently a media specialist at Prairie Crest Elementary School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

## Scholarship recipients

Through the ongoing generosity of our donors three graduate students received scholarships this year. Thank you donors!

### Hitting the ground running

A teacher librarian for three Urbandale elementary schools, **Melissa Marwedel** was grateful to receive the Iowa Library Association Foundation scholarship at the ILA conference on Oct. 4 (right). During her first “wild and crazy” year as a teacher librarian, she enjoyed sharing her favorite books with students and learned to adjust her program to fit the culture and goals of each building, one of which runs year-round.



This year Marwedel is getting a crash course in weeding since one of her libraries will be put in storage while the school is torn down and rebuilt. Needless to say, she regrets the lack of time to read new purchases.

### Following Mrs. Madsen



**Jill Doyle** received the Rigmor Madsen Endowed Scholarship through the UNI Foundation. Returning to college after 27 years, Doyle is an apt recipient for a scholarship created in honor of Rigmor Madsen, who went back to school in her fifties to become a teacher librarian. “This amazing award is truly a blessing for my family,” said Doyle. “As I pursue my master's degree, I hope to inspire others especially my daughters and show that it is never too late to follow your dreams.”

With a background in elementary education and public libraries, Doyle now works as a paraprofessional in a secondary school library and wants to prepare students to be successful 21st century learners.

### **Building excitement in the classroom**

A second year student in the School Library Studies program, **Kimberly Bormann** received a scholarship through the UNI Foundation's Library Science fund. Bormann started a new position this fall as a sixth-grade English language arts (ELA) teacher at North Union Middle School in Swea City, Iowa. She said, "I have been using my school library studies courses by bringing the excitement of reading into the ELA classroom through incorporating book tastings to select student-chosen novels for book clubs." She is very grateful for this scholarship and hopes to serve as a teacher librarian in the near future.



### **The UNI Foundation**

Scholarships like the Rigmor Madsen Scholarship Endowment Fund impact student success by providing financial support for UNI students. If you are interested in learning how you can make a difference for UNI students by creating a new or contributing to an existing scholarship, please contact the UNI Foundation at [319-273-7319](tel:319-273-7319) or [pledge online](#). Your generosity transforms the lives of teachers and students. Thank you!

## **School Library Studies**

*The UNI School Library Studies M.A. program prepares teachers to become K-12 teacher librarians. The program is primarily delivered online. It also features one on-campus session in which students work with their cohort group and develop a network of colleagues throughout Iowa.*

### **SCHOOL LIBRARY STUDIES**

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