



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Shirley Vonderhaar

Library Director

James Kennedy Public Library

svonderhaar@dyersville.lib.ia.us

**James Kennedy Public Library RECEIVES NATIONAL GRANT FOR SMALL AND RURAL LIBRARIES
\$10,000 Grant Will Help the Library Work with Residents with Dementia and Cognitive Decline**

[Dyersville] — The James Kennedy Public Library has been selected as one of 300 libraries to participate in the fourth and final round of Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities, an American Library Association (ALA) initiative that provides community engagement and accessibility resources to small and rural libraries to help them better serve people with disabilities.

The competitive award comes with a \$10,000 grant that will help the library develop programs, services and collections for those with dementia and cognitive decline.

“We are so proud to be chosen again for this amazing opportunity,” said Library Director Shirley Vonderhaar. *“For the last two rounds of funding, we focused on services for the neurodivergent community. This round will allow us to focus on the needs of our seniors.”*

As part of the grant, JKPL staff will take an online course in how to lead conversations, a skill vital to library work today. Staff will then host a conversation with residents and use the grant funds to provide services of benefit to those with cognitive decline. Ideas currently under discussion include insuring library spaces and staff are dementia friendly, facilitating regular memory cafes and reading programs, and enhancing collections to include sensory books, large print books, memory kits, tablets, and materials for care providers.

If you are interested in getting involved or taking part in the conversation, or just want more information, please contact Shirley Vonderhaar at svonderhaar@dyersville.lib.ia.us or (563)875-8912.

Since 2014, ALA’s Libraries Transforming Communities initiative has re-imagined the role libraries play in supporting communities. Libraries of all types have utilized free dialogue and deliberation training and resources to lead community and campus forums; take part in anti-violence activities; provide a space for residents to come together and discuss challenging topics; and have productive conversations with civic leaders, library trustees and staff.

“Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities is an initiative of the American Library Association (ALA) in collaboration with the Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL).”