

## Pay It Forward - Breaking away from Historical Fiction

This year's community book read is *Pay It Forward*. This marks a break in reading material as the other selections were historical fiction: *Follow the River*, *Counting on Grace* and *The Stonecutter's Aria*.

Published in 2000 the book is about an 8<sup>th</sup> grade boy named Trevor who lives in a small town in California. His class is challenged by their social studies teacher to "think of an idea for world change, and put it into action." Trevor takes this extra credit assignment seriously and comes up with this idea – he will do a good deed for three people. He will tell them that rather than paying him back they need to pay it forward by helping three people – those people will do the same thing-pay it forward and they will tell those people to pay it forward...

The author of the book, Catherine Ryan Hyde, uses different writing techniques in her book. One of the characters in the book is Chris Chandler, a news reporter. In the book Chandler is the person who chases down the story of the Pay It Forward movement, thus bringing it to the national scene. Excerpts from *Those Who Knew Trevor Speak* and *The Other Faces Behind the Movement*, books Chandler wrote later are included in *Pay It Forward*---entries from Trevor's journal are also used in the novel.

Because of these techniques it is sometimes difficult to remember that *Pay It Forward* is a work of fiction. And even though this is so, Hyde's book did start a real-life movement.

The Pay It Forward Foundation, [payitforwardfoundation.org](http://payitforwardfoundation.org) was established by the author and others "to educate and inspire students to realize that they can change the world, and provide them with opportunities to do so." The website lists schools that have encouraged students to pay it forward, communities who have used *Pay It Forward* for their community book read, how to get involved in the movement and other bits of information and encouragement.

Now, back to the book-- Trevor does accomplish good deeds and due to the work of news reporter Chandler, Trevor ends up on national news and gets to meet President Clinton. I will not tell you how the story ends though!

This year school age children will be encouraged to read *Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Day* or *Grow*, a book written in prose for older readers. *Grow* is about 2 misfit kids in Minneapolis who are brought together by a woman creating a community garden. *Ordinary Mary* is very similar to *Pay It Forward* as one simple act done by Mary starts a chain reaction of good deeds.

Both *Pay It Forward* and *Grow* are available at the Bartholomew County Public Library and *Ordinary Mary* will be arriving any day now. If you wish to read *Pay It Forward* you will need to place a reserve as all copies, seven at the main branch and one at Hope are currently checked out.

We encourage you to participate in a book discussion of *Pay It Forward* on October 7 at the library. On November 10 we will show the movie version of the book. If you have not read the book yet please do so prior to viewing the film, they are somewhat different.

Catherine Ryan Hyde will be in Columbus on October 20. She will meet with teens only at 4:00 p.m. in the library and share her motivation for writing *Pay It Forward* and answer questions.

At 7:00 p.m. the author will speak at a PIE ticketed event at City Hall. For more information on this event call 374-5280.

I encourage all of you to read this year's community book read and to carry on in Trevor's footsteps by paying it forward to others!

*Mary Clare Speckner is a Reference Librarian at Bartholomew County Public Library*