



PRESS RELEASE
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**FREE CARDS FOR TEENS: A LIBRARY INITIATIVE
\$20,000 FROM THE RED DEER & DISTRICT COMMUNITY FOUNDATION!**

Red Deer Public Library and the Red Deer and District Community Foundation are thrilled to announce a new initiative that will offer free library cards to teens for the next two years. The Community Foundation will grant Red Deer Public Library \$20,000 over the next two years, which is the cost of teen cards for a two year period.

"The cost of a library card is low, but it's still prohibitive for many teens," says Dean Frey, Director of Red Deer Public Library. "The library has given free cards to children 12 and under for years. Now, thanks to the Community Foundation, we can also offer free cards to teens age 13 – 17, and to 18 year olds who are still in high school."

Red Deer and District Community Foundation Executive Director Janice Wing says, "The Community Foundation is dedicated to enhancing life in Red Deer and area for all. This initiative addresses a community need, and we're excited to be a part of it. The funds for this grant were the result of earnings from permanent endowment funds - funds which are supported by generous donors from throughout Central Alberta."

The Free Cards for Teens initiative comes fresh on the heels of an announcement by the Red Deer Public Library and the Downtown Rotary Club of plans to create a state-of-the-art Teen Area in the Downtown Library, with the Library matching Rotary Club funds for the Teen Area with money from the Dickson Bequest. "The Community Foundation's grant to teens is the final piece of the puzzle," Frey says. "With the new Teen Area, we are displaying our commitment to the literacy of our youth, and now we've removed the last barrier to their use of the Library."

Both the Downtown and Dawe Branch Libraries began handing out free cards to teens the moment they received the good news from the Community Foundation. The big push to get free cards to all teens will be done in conjunction with the planning for, and the use of, the new Teen Area. Free cards will be offered to teens who live outside the city, as well, as are the free children's cards. Free teen cards will open up all resources at the Downtown and Dawe Branch Libraries, and at the Red Deer College Library.

One teen says, "This is great. I work part-time but it's still hard to find ten bucks sometimes. Now I'll use the library more."

Look for an Open House in the New Year, where detailed plans for the Teen Area will be unveiled after consultation with local teens, at which time the Free Cards for Teens initiative will kick off. The Rotary Teen Area is scheduled to open in September, 2004.

For more information on the Free Cards for Teens initiative, contact:

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