

BOOKISH IN BELEN

The Annual Letter of the Friends of the Belen Public Library

November 2025

People who support libraries

and literacy are bound by their belief in two things: the transformational power of the written (or spoken) word and the incalculable value of having a library at the heart of a community. We are such believers.

The Friends of the BPL incorporated as a nonprofit in 2011, but it has existed since the 1970s. Our mission is to support and promote the Belen Public Library and community literacy, and it is both our privilege and our promise to do so.

We feel fortunate to operate the only dedicated bookstore in Valencia County, a treasure trove of donated books in a vintage City-owned building. Book donations and sales allow us to fund a wide variety of initiatives at the Library and in its service area.

A team of remarkable volunteers tends to the myriad tasks involved in running a retail storefront: sorting and shelving the ever-changing inventory, sales and customer service, bookkeeping, housekeeping, installing bookcases, ordering supplies, repairs and upgrades, flagging valuable books for sale on eBay, promotion, transporting books, hosting school field trips, and prepping for special events. Our volunteer corps is, put simply, invaluable to our mission.

Books on Becker is an informal ambassador for Belén, attracting both locals and visitors to the downtown corridor. From November 2024 through October 2025, more than 3,000 customers came into the store. We welcomed shoppers from Pennsylvania, Michigan, Texas, Colorado, Florida, Oregon, California, and Australia(!) Of course, we also attract New Mexican book lovers, from Farmington to Las Cruces, from Catron County to Lincoln County.

Customers leave comments such as these in the store's guestbook:

continued



BOOKS ON BECKER

a nonprofit secondhand bookstore operated by the Friends and staffed by volunteers

Seven rooms. Comfy chairs. Thousands of \$1 books.

Hours: Tuesday thru Saturday, 12 noon to 5 p.m.

Address: 513 Becker Avenue in downtown Belén

Phone: 505-785-2835 (during store hours)

Payment: Cash or credit card

Kids, tweens, and teens who visit the bookstore can each select two FREE books* from their store sections every time they come in!
(High schoolers can select from YA or adult sections.)

Teachers and homeschoolers can select two FREE books* that support their curriculum, every time they visit.

Dictionaries, language & writing books, and Bibles are always FREE.

Book/media donations are welcome during store hours.

Your store purchases and book donations help fund library programs, scholarships, and a variety of community literacy initiatives. Thank you.

*regular-price books

Come find your treasure!

“Awesome selection of books of all types. My favorite place to go in Valencia County. Love the time spent searching your treasures. Charming spot for the book you need or think you need. I always find something. Thank you for making our community better! Love, love, love this place. I will be back for more. Very kind and helpful staff. Always a great experience.”

And from a child: *“This the best place ever.”*

We are grateful to each Friends member for their commitment and their generosity. We are also thankful for each donor; whether you put a dollar in the donation jar at the bookstore or put a check in the mail, you are saying “Yes” to literacy in the greater Belen area.

Within the past year, we accomplished:

- ◆ Pledging nearly \$9,000 to the Library for books and media, program supplies, technology, staff appreciation and professional development, event entertainers, workshop instructors, library tools, MakerSpace parts, advertising, and guitars
- ◆ Stewarding a \$500 in-kind donation of new books to the Library from Penguin Random House, only accessible to libraries with Friends groups
- ◆ Researching and facilitating the return to the Navajo Nation of rare, historical war ceremonial artwork found in the Library
- ◆ Awarding two Deborah Graham Memorial Scholarships to high school seniors Mikaila Chavez, to study environmental engineering at NM Tech, and Alondra Carmona, to study nursing at UNM
- ◆ Giving over 1,200 free books to kids and teens who visited Books on Becker
- ◆ Giving out hundreds of free kids’ books and healthy snacks at the National Night Out and Back

If you would like to make a monetary donation, become a Friends member (starts at just \$10), or renew your membership, there are several ways to do so. Visit www.booksonbecker.org/membership for all the details.

We now have quick & easy online payment options!

Follow Friends of the Belen Public Library on 

Follow Books on Becker on  and 

Email us at: connect@booksonbecker.org

Bookstore sign image by Dorie Corrao
Free kids’ books image by Merita Wilson

to School events in August

- ◆ Gifting hundreds of new children’s books to the Belen Public Health Office, Valencia County Literacy Council, and H2 Academic’s Angel Tree kids
- ◆ Stocking local laundromats and Little Free Libraries with surplus books
- ◆ Donating funds to Valencia County HeadStart, the Valencia County Literacy Council, and Valencia Shelter Services for their literacy efforts
- ◆ Supplying books for the set dressing of *Matilda Jr.: The Musical* presented by the Hub Community Theatre and hosting a cast performance at the Friends’ annual meeting
- ◆ Celebrating a milestone of 20 years for the Belen Readers Book Club, whose members meet monthly at the Library to share their adventures in reading

Together, the Library staff and the Friends work hard to ensure that everyone in our community has access to books, in the genres and formats needed, regardless of income or physical challenges. To do any less would be to deny the power of the word and the value of a library. And we are, after all, believers.

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