

Youth Services Board Report May 2026

April is always a month filled with the planning, preparation, and hosting of the Kleiman Creative Writing Contest. This was the 28th year for the contest and the awards banquet. It's interesting to note that the faces here at the library have changed throughout that time. But the contest itself has remained. The longevity of this contest really speaks to the dedication of the Kleiman family and the library staff.

This year we took a programming break the week before and the week of the banquet. I think we'll take this programming pause again next year. This gave staff more time to focus on all the pieces that go into the writing contest and the event itself. Staff from all parts of the library pitch in to make this contest possible. We also had some volunteers from Inspiration Ministries to help with setting up tables and chairs at the CLC. This year they cancelled, last minute for the morning setup. So, we called on staff from the library to help out. The volunteers were available in the evening to help tear down tables and chairs, which really makes the evening go more smoothly.

There were a few hiccups during the awards ceremony. There are many people who help double check all the information on our presentations and the outline for the evening. But things slip through. We always have a debrief after the contest and the event are over to discuss how things went. We make notes and keep a running list of things we'll do differently the next year. It's a wonderful contest to have here in Kendallville, and we look forward to many more.

The author, Shannon Anderson, was a big hit with the attendees. Her talk was engaging and tailored to young readers. I had a phone call the day after the event from a grandparent who had attended. They said this was one of the best events they'd been to in a long time.

At the end of the month, we were sad to receive the 2 weeks' notice of one of our Youth Assistants, Brylea. We wish her every success in her future endeavors and she will be missed. We're currently accepting applications for the position.

Summer reading is right around the corner, and the youth department is in the midst of putting all the pieces together.

Sincerely,
Mary Graber



Kleiman Writing Contest: Shannon Anderson



Kleiman Writing Contest: 4th grade participants