

Willi library ready to roll

Donations sought for 'book bike'

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WILLIMANTIC — The Thread City’s downtown library may soon have its own pair of wheels to cruise around in style and deliver library services to locations outside its Main Street site.

Folks with the Willimantic Public Library are asking community members to donate to a crowdfunding campaign for a library “book bike.”

The library is looking to purchase a Haley electric tri-cycle, with a cargo bin, to bring the library and its services out to the community.

The bin will be loaded with books, a laptop, WiFi hotspot and other materials for library patrons.

The bike will appear at community events like the farmers market, 3rd Thursday street festivals, Shaboo Stage performances and the Boom Box Parade.

In addition, library staff members could pedal to schools, daycares, apartment



The exterior of the Willimantic Public Library is seen here in September. The library is looking to purchase a 'book bike' to bring its services throughout the community. File photo

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Willimantic Library Director Dan Paquette

complexes, the senior center, nursing homes, the co-op or the laundromat.

“I’m very excited about the prospect of reaching out to the whole community, especially to people who can’t make it to the library,” said

Willimantic Library Director Dan Paquette in a release issued by the Friends of the Willimantic Public Library.

The campaign opened Monday and closes June 1.

If the campaign reaches its \$5,500 goal by the dead-

line, the project will receive a matching grant from Sustainable CT’s Community Match Fund.

The total budget of \$11,000 will cover most or all of the expenses of the Book Bike

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Program for one year.

The Friends of the Library, a group responsible for fundraising efforts for the library, is asking the community to donate to the campaign.

“I’m thrilled that the Friends are supporting this effort and doing the work to make it happen,” Paquette said. “It wouldn’t be possible otherwise.”

Board chairman Merle Potchinsky said the bike is one way to be out in the community.

“One of the most significant aspects of our board’s strategic plan is to reach out to our diverse Windham community in appealing, engaging and, yes, delightful ways,” Potchinsky said in the release.

“This extraordinary book bike program will be so exciting to our children, so accessible to our less mobile

elderly, and so convenient to our adult population.”

Sustainable CT is an initiative of Eastern Connecticut State University’s Institute for Sustainable Energy.

The fund is supported by the Smart See Fund, the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation and the Connecticut Green Bank.

“Through the Community Match Fund, we aim to put residents at the forefront of creating positive, impactful change,” wrote Abe Hilding-Salorio, community outreach manager for Sustainable CT.

For more information about the fundraiser and making donations, visit Patronicity.com/WPLBookBike. For more information on the Willimantic Public Library, call 860-465-3079 or visit <https://willimanticlibrary.org>.

Follow Claire Galvin on Twitter - @CGalvinTC.



A sign shows current hours of operation at the Willimantic Public Library. File photo