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Welcome to the Vespasian Warner Public Library District Podcast.

Libraries are repositories of knowledge. They grant access to a world of information to anyone who walks through the doors and offers educational opportunities to people of every age.

As a result of focus groups conducted in the fall of 2024, the Vespasian Warner Library has recently made an effort to expand its learning opportunities for its patrons and the community.

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ABCMouse.com is a fun, gamified way for kids to learn. Available for free at the library, when you go to the website, kids will be prompted to pick an age, anywhere from two to eight plus.

The home screen features age-appropriate areas for kids to explore: their learning path, classroom, zoo, farm, and the map, which allows kids to explore even more activities, like shopping, the pet park, the theater, the library, and toddler time. The bottom of the home screen also offers a selection of new and featured activities, as well as things to do.

Kids can personalize their avatar and their avatar's room by purchasing items with tickets earned by doing the activities. The activities include reading books, doing puzzles, playing games, coloring, and even singing songs, and will help children learn things like reading, math, colors, and telling time, as well as learn about animals and the world around them.

There's so much to explore and the activities are so much fun, the kids won't even realize that they're learning.

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For kids interested in science, there are now STEM kits available for them to check out.

Found on the children's floor, the kits cover a variety of science subjects and contain equipment and activities for kids to get a hands-on learning experience.

There are eight kits:

The early motor skills kit, which comes with a board book, peg sorter game, magnetic puzzle game, and a spiral tower game that encourages the development of fine motor skills in kids ages 1-3.

I love animals veterinary kit, which allows kids to pretend to be a veterinarian, and provides a book filled with animal facts, making it ideal for kids from pre-k to 3rd grade.

A planetarium projector which includes a dual function planetarium projector, rotating night sky, 24 high resolution images including all of the planets, moon, sun, International Space station, and more, and 50 different picture combinations, making it a perfect kit for ages 8 and up.

A microscope science lab which includes blank slides, plant slides, slide covers and labels, rocks and minerals, a specimen dish, tweezers and pipette, stickers, and a lab guide, allowing kids 8 and up to examine their world closely.

My amazing body kit, which teaches children about the human body thanks to a book, a double-sided magnetic human body, a cross section of the brain, and a cross section of the heart, making it an engaging kit for kids in 2nd grade and up.

The electronics, coding, and bots kit, which encourages children to learn about electronics with a book, the Artie 3000 drawing robot, and the Snap Circuit Jr, which includes 32 snap pieces, and is perfect for kids 9 and older.

The green energy kit, which introduces kids in 4th grade and up to solar, wind, and geothermal energy and encourages them to build over 125 projects using different energy sources with a book and 4 transforming solar robot snap circuits.

And, the explore circuits kit, which encourages kids 4th grade up and up to learn the history of technology and inventions and provides them with a marble circuit which involves strategy, logic, and coding, and a circuit rocket mission that involves putting a rocket, space rover, and landing pad together.

The kits were made possible by a generous Youth Engaged with Philanthropy (YEP) grant from the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation (ilprairiecf.org), which is a grant making public charity dedicated to enhancing the lives of those in the communities of DeWitt, McLean, Livingston, and Logan counties.

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Adults have a learning opportunity, too, with Mango, which is great for all ages.

Mango languages is an app and website that offers dozens of languages for users to learn, including popular languages like Spanish, French, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, and German to

Polish, Czech, Russian, Vietnamese, Yiddish, Portuguese, and Arabic to endangered languages like Cherokee, Hawaiian, Scottish Gaelic, and Potawatomi. There is even an American Sign Language course and courses for kids.

Patrons will need a valid email address to sign up for Mango. Once they've signed up, they'll be able to affiliate themselves with the Vespasian Warner Library using their barcode and PIN under the organizations option. By affiliating with the library, this makes Mango free to users and allows access to all of the languages.

If you can't remember your PIN, please contact the library and we'll be happy to assist you.

Mango organizes the language learning into units which are broken down into chapters focusing on specific aspects of the language. For example, the Italian introduction unit has chapters on salutations and small talk, languages and origins, introductions and professions, and personal information and preferences. The lessons also have educational tidbits about the

customs and culture of the language that you're learning. The idea is to make learners comfortable with speaking, understanding, and conversing with the language.

There are even specialty units that provide patrons the opportunity to learn a little something extra.

At the top of the unit, learners can see how many chapters and lessons there are and what the learning goals of the unit are.

Just a few minutes a day can have patrons speaking a whole new language.

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Learning with the library can be fun and beneficial to all ages and now the library has a few more ways to engage your brain.

Thank you for joining us.

For more information about the Vespasian Warner Public Library District and its new learning opportunities, please go to vwarner.org.

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