

# **AARP: Reeseville library plan to develop Naturalist To Go Kits wins AARP WI 'Small Dollar, Big Impact' grant**

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**REESEVILLE, WI** – A proposal submitted by the Reeseville Public Library to purchase materials that will be packed into nearly a dozen “Naturalist To Go Kits” for families to check out from the library and utilize in various nature/science settings has been selected to receive this month’s AARP Wisconsin “Small Dollar, Big Impact” grant.

AARP Wisconsin is awarding grants each month throughout 2022 to projects across the state that are designed to improve communities and make them better places for everyone to live, work and play as they age. Judges selected this project for a \$1,000 grant after reviewing dozens of proposals submitted from all over the state.

“These grants are exactly what the name describes – short-term, low-cost solutions that could have remarkable impacts on the shaping of neighborhoods and cities,” said Darrin Wasniewski, Associate State Director of Community Outreach for AARP Wisconsin. “Reeseville Public Library’s Naturalist To Go program embodies the spirit of Small Dollar, Big Impact Grant. The library identified a community strength and developed a way to enhance it so that it can be easily scaled up from this beginning stage. These kits provide an excellent opportunity to experience nature.”

The library is in the process of gathering supplies to create 10 Naturalist To Go Kits, which will center around the themes of insects, rocks, astronomy, trees and weather. Each kit will include three books, a clipboard, a pack of colored pencils, a No. 2 pencil, a nature journal with blank paper, coloring pages, a laminated

information set (seven pages on a metal ring), and items specific to the science such as a set of junior binoculars, compass, plastic ruler or magnifying glass.

The items will all be packed into canvas backpacks, which will be available for checkout at the library. Families can come in and pick out a theme to learn more about, then take the kit out into nature for their own adventure.

“The Reeseville Public Library is grateful to AARP for awarding us the Small Dollar, Big Impact Grant to fund our Naturalist To Go Kits,” said library director Kay Kromm. “We are excited to be able to promote an intergenerational love of natural science. This grant is an excellent fit for the library will make a great impact on our small community.”

The project was launched after the Reeseville Library Board and the Friends of the Library brainstorming ways that the library can better serve the community in a digital world. One of the ideas that had been discussed for years is that of naturalist To Go Kits.

“Reeseville is a village with just under 700 individuals. The library is the only safe and free place for folks to find education and entertainment. Internet access is also an issue in our rural community. We strive to engage patrons of all ages from a small library in an old, converted house,” Kromm said.

The kits will allow families to learn about nature on their own schedule with as many individuals as they choose. The kits, which can be obtained and used by anyone with a library card, will give library patrons all the items they need to explore natural science together on their own schedule.

AARP Wisconsin’s launched its “Small Dollar, Big Impact” grant program in 2020 and is now in its third year of helping proposed projects move forward in rural and urban parts of the state.

“This project fits perfectly with the spirit and intent of the Small Dollar, Big Impact grant program,” said AARP Wisconsin Interim State Director Christina FitzPatrick. “Our goal is to support communities as they make positive changes that inspire long-term progress on livable issues. This proposal hits that nail right on the head.”

The grant program is open to some nonprofits and government entities. For more information on the program, visit [www.aarp.org/WIsdbi](http://www.aarp.org/WIsdbi)