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Newburyport Celebrates Its Favorite Books in Love Letters Exhibition

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Love Letters, a community celebration of reading in association with the Newburyport Literary Festival, will be on exhibition at the Firehouse Center for the Arts from April 12–May 1. The walls of the Firehouse will be covered with hundreds of Love Letters from the Newburyport community to their favorite books. The brainchild of festival director Vicki Hendrickson, the project is being organized by local artist and educator Susan Kapuscinski Gaylord.

The children of Newburyport will provide the core of the exhibition. The Brown, Kelley, and Bresnahan Schools have responded with enthusiasm. Librarians Judy Avery, Karen McCarty, and Karen Twomey are working with their library classes. Karen McCarty of the Kelley School reports, "The children are having a blast." Children in Ann McCrea's Kids Art Saturday art class spent several rapt hours making their letters.

Gaylord hopes that readers of all ages will contribute to the project. All you need is a favorite book, or character, or author, and a piece of 8.5 x 11 paper (standard size copy paper held vertically). The book can be fiction, poetry, nonfiction, or a graphic novel. It can be one you read last month, last year, or twenty years ago. Adding visual elements (with collage, stencil, rubber stamps, drawings, etc.) will make the letters more appealing in the exhibition. To get you started, sample Love Letters can be viewed at the Newburyport Public Library or online at www.newburyportliteraryfestival.org. For those needing an extra push, a workshop will be held at the Newburyport Public Library on Saturday, April 7, from 9–12. Love Letters may be delivered to the Love Letters Box at the library or mailed (unfolded) to Love Letters/Newburyport Literary Festival/Box 268/Newburyport, MA 01950 by April 7.

The exhibition will be on view at the Firehouse from April 12–May 1. A reception will be held on Sunday, April 15, from 12–2 PM.