

books. There are also 12 novels introducing children to national cultural assets, such as *Grandpa Lin Builds a House*, and *Traditional Chinese Musical Instruments*. In the art category there are five books on early drama in Taiwan by senior dramatists at the Taiwan Theater Museum, as well as 20 volumes on early Taiwanese musicians.

Chairwoman Chen noted that the books bring the beauty of Taiwanese culture to the world stage.

Even Tots can Get a Library Card at the Taichung County Cultural Center Library

After several months of renovation, the Taichung County Cultural Center Library reopened this March with a brand new look. The library also introduced a new policy that allows even swaddling babes to apply for a library card, making it the first library in Taiwan to lend books to kids of all ages. A toddler by the name of Lin Li-yan was the first child to apply for a card under the new policy.

The cultural center said that the remodeled library greets visitors with a new feeling, more reading space, sofas and a comfortable coffeehouse-like environment. Moreover, the library has a new AV area and will close the old AV room. Groups wishing to use the AV section need to make advance reservations. The children's area has also been expanded to include a small stage and high quality tables and chairs, proving a reading space with more choices.

Public Libraries for a New Age

Library representatives from across Taiwan took part in a March 4 videoconference inauguration of 301 public libraries updated as part of the Council for Cultural Affairs' (CCA) NT\$1.5 billion "New Age Public Libraries" program. Representatives of public libraries in Jhuangwei Township (Ilan County), Yingge (Taipei County), Gukeng (Yunlin County), and Hunei (Kaohsiung County) joined

county chiefs, officials of the CCA and NCL, and other dignitaries for the lively inaugural event. Planners decided to use video conferencing technology to symbolize the progress of public libraries and the spread of digital technology to local communities across Taiwan. The project aimed to remodel libraries along the lines of a bookstore, offering a comfortable and inviting place for learning. Library officials illustrated the improvements in the example of the Jhuangwei Public Library, whose collection includes over 32,000 volumes, including a good selection of travel and culinary books. The library was re-designed around three main themes: 1) Library Stroll: an introduction to using the library, arranged in a labyrinthine format; 2) Library Tour: a fishing game introducing the various libraries and rooms; and 3) "Books are My Friends": a guessing game to encourage an interest in reading.

Reading for All Seasons

The Taipei Public Library (TPL) and Taiwan Reading Association jointly kicked off a "Reading for the Four Seasons" activity on March 4. The program will recommend a book for each season in order to stimulate an interest in reading among kids and develop a literary climate in Taiwan.

The organizers will also invite scholars and experts to write book introductions and reviews, as well as hold seminars and workshops to promote the reading of good books throughout the year.

TPL director Tseng Shu-hsien said that according to the library's most recent book lending data, the lending rate for children's books was 32.55%, indicating that encouragement from primary school curricula has helped children foster the habit of borrowing and reading books. She also noted that borrowing rates were lowest among those aged 20 to 30. In addition, the chairperson of Taiwan Reading Association Ke Hua-wei noted that the recommended book for the first