



Library Department Head Report

May 22, 2016



GRAND RAPIDS
IT'S IN MINNESOTA'S NATURE

Our winter and spring have been filled with programs and activities. The Library continues to focus on the goals identified in our strategic plan, and on creating a welcoming place for our community.

Strategic Plan Implementation Update

The Library Board, Library staff and representatives from the Friends of the Library and the Library's volunteer Program Committee gathered input from the community and developed a revised strategic plan for 2014-2017.

We are in the midst of collecting responses and setting priorities for a revised strategic plan to cover 2017-2020, and should have that plan completed later this summer

In the meantime, we continue to work on the service priorities and respond to the following requests and suggestions:

Service Priority # 1: Parents will feel supported in preparing their preschoolers for learning success, and primary students will develop a love of reading and learning.

- **Saturday Story Times** continued through the winter and spring, thanks to the generosity of the Library Foundation. This winter and spring the attendance ranged from 26-85 each Saturday, split between 2 sessions. We are the only Library in the area that is open on Saturdays during the summer, so we will continue to draw families from throughout Itasca County.
- We have seen many **class visits** already this spring and a few more are scheduled before the end of the year. May is generally a very popular time for class visits. Several Southwest and Murphy 3rd and 4th grade classes have been walking or taking the bus to the Library regularly, and we have had many visits from area preschools and kindergarten classes.
- Our winter Reading program, **Paul Bunyan's Big Read**, began on December 17 with tall tales and an art session with the Creativity Tank. 340 children signed up throughout December, January and February and picked up a book log to record their reading or reading-related activities.
- Our Summer Reading Program **Reading By Design** kicks off on May 20th with an opportunity to create a summer idea journal.
- We are continuing our monthly Lego Building Club on Tuesdays after school. Young designers create a small or large item based on a theme (or not) and leave them on display in the children's section during the month. Attendance each month has ranged from 20-45. Lego Club will continue through the summer.
- We began to offer additional after-school programming beginning in January, thanks to the Library Foundation. Each month we have an art program and a STEM program. These programs will also continue through the summer, and additional regular programs will be offered



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Service Priority # 2: Individuals will be supported in their personal search for knowledge and development of skills and careers.

- Our **winter and spring programming** for adults has included such programs as: *Radon in Your Home*, *Hiking the Appalachian Trail*, and *WWI*
- We continued an afternoon series called *Get Your Ducks in a Row* which covered a variety of life topics such as digital estate planning, identity theft, and organizing. The programs attracted anywhere from 20 -70 people each session. We will continue this through the summer with more programs on estate planning and Medicare.

Service Priority #3: Individuals will have access to online resources that connect them to their community and the world

- Our public computers continue to be used often by people taking **online classes**, those doing homework for local classes, those taking exams for professional licensure, as well as those with daily needs such as email access and a myriad of other communication and printing needs.
- Our public **wireless** network is in constant use by people bringing their own devices for work, study or communication.

Service Priority #4: Individuals will enjoy varied options that enrich their leisure time, broaden their world view, and inspire their creativity.

- **Legacy-Funded Programs:** We have hosted several programs arranged by Arrowhead Regional Library System including: *Old MacDonald had a Banjo* and a *MN Woodcut Painting* workshop.
- **A commitment to cultural diversity in programming and displays continues:** We hosted William Green, author of *Degrees of Freedom: The Origins of Civil Rights in Minnesota, 1865-1912*.
- **Alternate Formats are very popular:** Circulation of downloadable ebooks and audio books is high. Our patrons downloaded a total of 20,267 items, more than the total for 2015. There are more than 9700 audiobook titles and 12000 ebook titles available to all holders of an ALS library card. We also provide access to over 100 online magazines through Overdrive and online children's books and games through Tumblebooks. All of these are available through our web site.
- The **teen winter reading program** took place during December, January and February. For teens, winter break provides a small window of opportunity to enjoy reading for pleasure. Summer provides more of an opportunity, so we will see more teens this summer.
- The book choice for **Rapids Reads** this spring was *Fall to Grace*, by Minnesota Author Kerry Casey. In addition to having the author speak, we also had Dan Jones, instructor at the Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, talk about Native American Spirituality, one of the elements in the book.



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Service Priority #5: Individuals and organizations will experience a comfortable, safe, quiet and welcoming place.

- Our meeting room is heavily utilized by organizations large and small – an average of 50/month.
- Our quiet study rooms are used by individuals seeking a quiet space or a space for 2 people to meet and work. We always have a jigsaw puzzle laid out on a table with an open invitation to sit and relax.
- We will continue to take advantage of the space around the library by using it for children's and adult programs. This summer we will have a series of programs for kids that will be outside and will look at the river and the riverbanks. We will also have a program on dog training in May, and yoga programs in July and August

Service Priority # 6: Individuals will find opportunities to work together, share ideas, discuss, and collaborate.

- The teen Anime Club continues, bringing teens together monthly to watch an anime movie and talk about anime and manga.
- Our tables and study rooms provide spaces for working on group projects, popular with high school and college students and people meeting for work or organization related purposes.

Building, and grounds repairs and upgrades

- The back door and frame (staff entrance) was replaced in December.
- The public areas of the Library were repainted in late December. We closed for 2 days, and staff and volunteers took advantage of the quiet to complete about 90% of an inventory of the 70,000 items in the collection.
- Several cracked windows were discovered in November and December, and most have been replaced.
- We replaced the Self-Checkout unit with one that is easier to use and more reliable. It now handles about 25% of the materials checked out.
- We will start maintenance of the siding, caulking, and trim on the outside of the building and it may be a larger job than we anticipated.

Passports

Our passport service continues, but at a slower pace than we saw last winter. We still anticipate a total of around 1000 applications for the year. People have commented on the convenient hours and location, parking, and the "family friendly" atmosphere.

Staff

- Children's librarian, Darla Kirwin is retiring effective June 9.
- Tracy Kampa, Children's Library Public Services Clerk, will take her place.
- Will Richter, Reference Librarian, (and GFRD firefighter) has responded to 22 fire calls so far this year during his shifts at the Library, with a total time spent of 28 hours.
- Amy Dettmer continues to provide staff support for the Arts and Culture Commission

The Library continues to be very busy, with many people attending programs, borrowing materials, using computers, asking for information, or just hanging out!