

2025 Annual Report



CORE VALUES

We believe these values are intrinsic to public library services.

When we start something new or revisit an existing service, we analyze it to make sure it fulfills one or more of our core values. As you browse these pages, you'll notice the icons below. They indicate the values we believe the event, service, or collection achieves.



ACCESS

The library strives to ensure open and supported access to library facilities, materials, programming, and information resources for all.



COLLABORATION

The library strives to be a good steward of the investment and trust the public has placed in it by working together with non-profit organizations, governmental entities, businesses, and individuals that share the library's mission to maximize the benefits available to the community.



EQUITY, DIVERSITY, & INCLUSION

The library recognizes the worth of each person and fosters an environment of inclusion, diversity, and equity in order to serve as a reflection of the community we serve.



INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

The library recognizes, supports, and protects the right of every individual to both seek and receive information, and provides resources and programs that offer a wide variety of viewpoints on a broad range of topics.



LIFELONG LEARNING

The library meets learners of all ages and stages where they are, helping them access knowledge that will unlock everything from wonder and opportunity to leisure and adventure.



SERVICE

The library provides knowledgeable assistance and quality resources to ensure a positive and welcoming customer experience.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

We are fast approaching the four-year anniversary of the Grand Reopening of our newly-remodeled library. A lot has happened since then, and for our many customers we hope it now feels like home. The impressive numbers in this report show that library staff members love to organize information and leave no statistic unturned. We hope you also see that numbers alone don't tell the story of the impact a public library can have on its community. We appreciate all of the comments we receive from you that let us know what we are doing right, and where we can improve.

We continue to include new types of materials in our collection to reflect new formats, new information, and new topics of interest. We know that change can sometimes be hard. Those of us who've been around for a while remember how difficult it was to relinquish cassettes in favor of CDs and VHS tapes for DVDs! We still have *a lot* of books and are adding more all the time. But now we also have tens of thousands of online materials available to you with your library card.

All of us who are lucky enough to work here care so much about you. We delight in choosing books, planning programs, and hiring and training people for whom customer service is of the utmost importance. We are happy to share book or movie suggestions, sign you up to learn a new skill, welcome you to our many events, encourage you to enjoy our art gallery, admire the view from the terrace, or host a meeting in one of our beautiful meeting rooms. If you haven't been to the library for a while, come check us out. See you soon!



Nancy Kerr

Nancy Kerr
Library Director

"It's so great that you offer this! I like trying new things."



New in 2025, we offered free samples of a new spice each month along with recipes and spice information. Customers love both the informative handouts and getting to "try before they buy."



2025 recipes



"This is one of two places outside of my apartment that I know I will be safe. I always feel safe here."



"

This is one of the best libraries I've ever been to. The staff are super helpful and friendly. As a college student, you can get a free library card, even if you're not from Wisconsin. As an English major, I've been able to borrow a lot of my books for college from the library for free. I highly recommend it.

"

COMMUNITY LANGUAGES SECTION

After analyzing data from local schools and community groups, we discovered there was a need for more books written in the non-English primary languages spoken at home. This collection was built for first-language speakers. Spanish and Hmong were prioritized, and French was included as a bridge language for many multilingual households.

While Ojibwe is not the most widely spoken non-English language in the area today, we included Ojibwe materials to reflect our commitment to honoring Indigenous voices and histories. These books help to support ongoing efforts to preserve and revitalize the language.



Staff reports.... 142 books were checked out in the first month alone!



YOUTH SERVICES

People often think of services for kids and teens when they think about public libraries. While we work hard to remind customers that we're here for them at every stage of life, there's no doubting the formative impact that good youth librarians have on young lives. Our team is one of the very best, and you don't need to take our word for it!



"I need to give a huge shout out to your youth services staff. A staff member noticed my daughter on the spectrum was having a rough time. She helped us find the comfort room, and my kiddo was able to decompress and return to having fun! Thanks!"



Staff reports.... A mom returned the Neurodiversity Kids' Activity Backpack kit and said she absolutely loved the books and activities in it. Her daughter was delighted to be able to relate to the characters in the picture books.

Staff reports.... A parent with kids visiting from New York said, "Who knew we'd have to travel all the way to Wisconsin to find the best library?!"



"My little one loves visiting libraries anytime we travel. We are from the Cities, and this truly is a special place!"



Staff reports.... A family attending their first Dabble Box Open Lab expressed how much they love the library. According to one of the kiddos, we're "not as good as Action City" but we're a close second!

"Thank you guys for all you do! I had some postpartum depression after baby and Bouncing Babies really helped."



"We had the best time in the escape room this week — my 3rd and 5th grader loved it. Thank you for all the unique things you dream up and make happen throughout the year."



Staff reports.... A parent stopped me to say "thank you" for all of our children's programming. She got a bit teary-eyed as she explained how much our free services mean to her family of seven.



"I especially appreciate that you always have books with diverse characters and perspectives on the top of the bookshelves, easy for parents like myself to grab to bring home and read to our children. Thank you!"



Staff reports.... A teacher attending a craft event with her granddaughter asked if she could take one of the paper shapes to trace for a classroom craft. I mentioned that the public can use our die cut collection and Cricut machine at no cost. She was ecstatic about this new-to-her service.



Staff reports.... A mom told me that her child earned a 98 in Reading on her STAR test. She said: "If a kid excels in reading, she can learn anything, and thanks to you and everything you all do here, my daughter loves to read."

"I want to thank the teen library staff for providing such fun and just all around brilliant activities for teens. I can see the library is really putting out an incredible effort to be such a positive community space."



INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM



Our customers don't have much to say about the library's commitment to intellectual freedom. We think that's a good thing.

The freedom to think and learn about anything you want without judgment, and to access the materials that fuel your intellectual exploration, tends to go unnoticed unless it's taken away.

It's important for all of us who select materials to be aware of our own biases, and make sure that we are always selecting materials according to our policies and procedures rather than even unintentionally gravitating toward materials that we might personally prefer. We use customer comments and suggestions, professional reviews, and lots of statistics to determine what to buy.

We believe that privacy is also important to free thinking. While our staff is and has always been aware of to the need to protect our customers' privacy, we're proud to offer an additional layer by providing self-checkout stations. Unless a customer has activated the option to retain a record of what they've read, that information is deleted from our records. We don't talk about what you borrow, even with each other.

Staff reports....

A customer was so happy about getting an item they requested for purchase. It was the second one they got using that process.



3D PRINTING

The library has 3D printers that reproduce digital files as solid objects. And our service is free! In 2025, we processed 196 3D print requests. We have plenty of materials to help you learn, as well as hands-on classes.



Staff reports....

A customer told me that they are beyond grateful to be empowered by the library to engage in their hobbies.

Staff reports.... **A customer mentioned loving the visual nod to community-building. She also expressed gratitude for these new craft ideas to try with her kids.**

I don't know how you come up with so many cool ideas all the time. Pretty neat stuff!

COMMUNITY ART PROJECT

During the summer we tried something new by organizing a community art project. Project supplies were available on the BookBike and in the library from June through July, and the finished pieces were displayed in the Level 0 community display space in August.



HOME DELIVERY SERVICE

With the help of volunteer drivers from the Friends of the Library, the library delivers materials to customers whose mental health, physical health, or other circumstances make it too difficult for them to visit in person. In 2025, we delivered to an average of 140 customers every three weeks! While the majority of Home Delivery customers are long-term, the service is also available on a short-term basis for people recovering from surgeries, injuries, or other life events such as a new child.

Staff reports.... **The customer said it had been years since she read a book because she wasn't able to come to the library anymore. She asked how much the service cost, and when she learned it was free she needed a minute before she could talk again.**

Staff reports.... A color blind visitor discovered the Color Blind Glasses Kit in our Library of Things during a tour and tried them out. There were happy tears in his eyes when he told me...



"Lives are being changed here."



Call 715-839-4857 for Home Delivery Services or scan the QR code.

1/4
million
in-person
visits!

2025 Stats

We added **14,842** items
to our physical collections
this year, mostly books.

Now we own **123,894**
items, also mostly books.

We have **31,771**
cardholders...

roughly **1** in every
5 residents of the
Chippewa Valley
Metro Area.

We answered
more than
29,276
reference
questions.
That's about
9 questions
every hour
we're open.

And we're not
counting things
like "Where is
the bathroom,"
or "...this book,"
or "...my hold?"

41,073 people
attended our **917**
events for kids, teens,
adults, and all ages.

That 's around
130 people and
3 events every
day we're open.

It may surprise you how many times people
use our Internet computers: **20,753**.

That's about **6 to 7** people
starting a session every hour.

 **L.E. Phillips Memorial
Public Library**

Customers checked
out physical items
644,071 times.

That's more
than **2,000**
items a day.