

public libraries are

ESSENTIAL ENGAGED VALUED

At IFLS libraries in 2024 people checked out **2,423,481** physical items, and **961,927** virtual ones. We welcomed almost **90,000** new cardholders. Library visitors logged into public WiFi well over **250,000** times. That's just the start of our story.



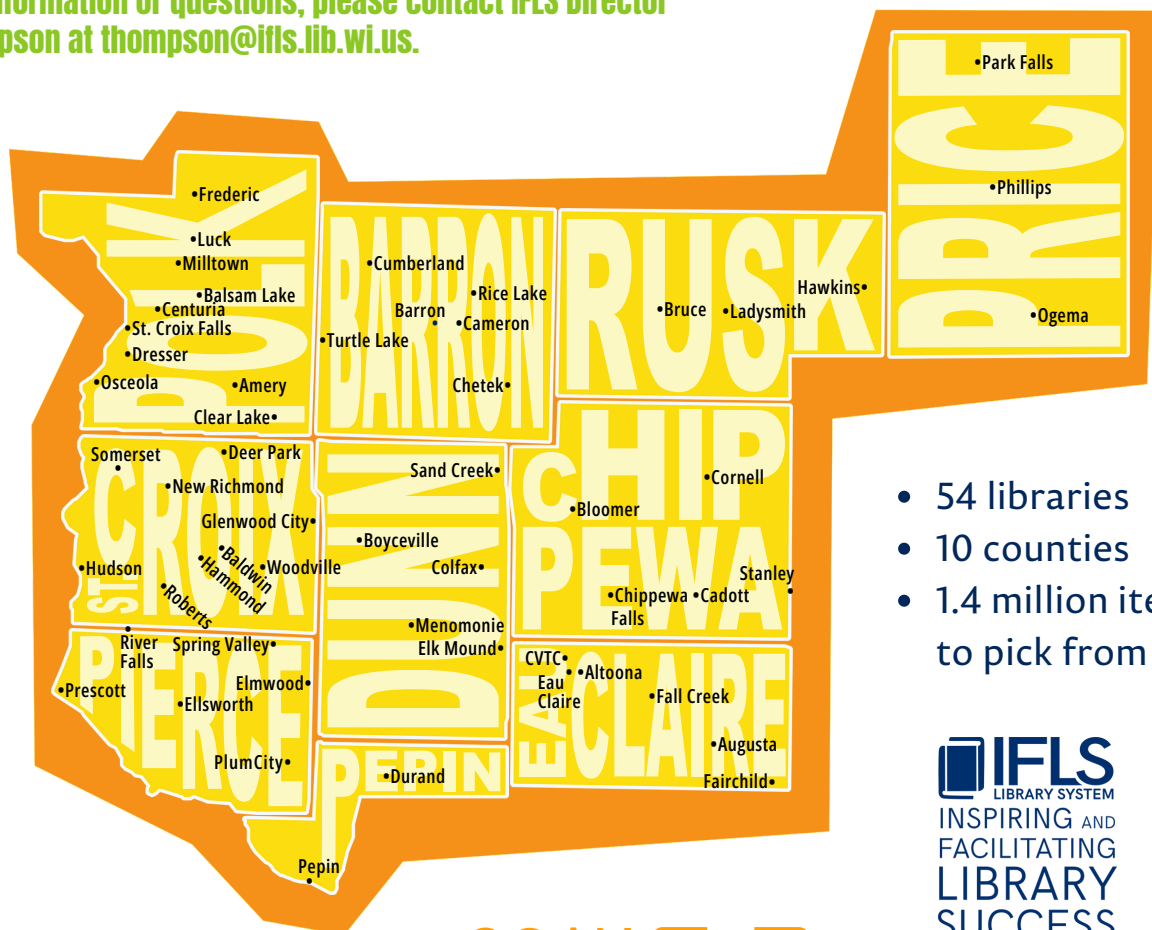
Thank you for your continued support!

How does your support make cost-effective and high-quality library services to your communities possible? IFLS provides:

- Innovative and collaborative IT and Website support across multiple systems.
- Management of our popular MORE shared catalog, giving all cardholders in our service area access to over 1.4 million items.
- Quality professional development for library workers and trustees. We create resources with in-house expertise, as well as collaborative projects statewide.
- Targeted training resources for our libraries. Training articles and other resources on the IFLS website and Niche Academy were accessed over 100,000 times in 2024.
- 241 in-person or virtual consultations to libraries in ten counties covering topics like building projects, grant-writing, new director training, staff training, computer systems and updates, personnel and board issues. These visits ensure compliance with state statute and promote best practices.

You can be proud of the high-quality library services that you make possible for your constituents. Thank you!

For more information or questions, please contact IFLS Director John Thompson at thompson@ifls.lib.wi.us.



- 54 libraries
- 10 counties
- 1.4 million items to pick from

IFLS
LIBRARY SYSTEM
INSPIRING AND
FACILITATING
LIBRARY
SUCCESS

Find your library: **SCAN ME** 

iflsweb.org

Public Libraries are a community asset, a valued and trusted community partner, an investment in lifelong learning, and a safe gathering place for people of all ages.

Don't take our word for it! We asked people in our communities to share their comments about libraries.

We heard back from more than 400 people. Here's what they had to say.

ALTOONA

I grew up in a low-income family. We have never been able to afford WiFi, so the library was my home as a kid. Having access to books was so crucial to my development, as was free **internet access**. Without my local library, I would never have been able to succeed to the level that I did as a high school student. The Altoona library was and still is a **safe space** for me to work on assignments and research, even as a college student. If libraries were to be removed, it could rob underprivileged children of the safest most accessible space they have in terms of academic success. - *Reagan Conklin*

Great opportunity for free events for kids and families! Free good books you can borrow so don't need to have them clutter up your home! Helpful librarians!

Regina is just amazing. She does so much in the library and her programs and events are always so well organized and fun for children. She is thoughtful and caring and really shows how great of a library Altoona is.

I've never seen Margie without a smile on her face. She is warm and **welcoming to everyone** who steps into the library. It makes me love going to Altoona because she makes everyone feel like they are her favorite patron.

Altoona is a small-town library, or at least that is the feeling you get when you go there. They have great books and fun programs. **But the best part is the people who work there.** They are all so happy and greet every person who walks through the door. In Altoona, it always feels like they are so glad every person is there. They are also very kind and helpful to everyone. It makes people want to spend more time at the library. Thank you to all the Altoona staff, you are the best thing about the library!

I've lived in Altoona since 2003 and enjoy using the library in all the years I've lived here. Friendly staff, solid collection (especially with MORE library). Even E.C. folks use it.

Trips to the library is a lifetime activity. As a child, my parents took us to the library after dinner on Monday. After the library, we visited the Mother Goose House for ice cream: a very sweet memory. I "inherited" love of books from my mother who was always reading, thus the regular visits to the library. I've lived in many places and always stake out the library as soon as I arrive. My latest move two and a half years ago was to Eau Claire but just before the move, I learned the library would be closed briefly. I found nearby Altoona Public Library, even closer and more convenient than the EC Library. Lucky me! I visit about once a week, gather my reserved books, briefly visit with the very friendly librarians, and I'm set for regular reading. I read well over 100 books a year. - *Edith Wagner, huge fan*

Learning is the key to upward momentum. Altoona Public Library stands out as a library that has provided me with **ongoing learning materials** (books on Wisconsin trail systems, outdoor first aid, and unbiased political education). The library has friendly staff that truly get to know you. I feel comfortable going to my librarian to ask for help with things as big as tax prep and as little as what book my book club should read next. The library has also been outstanding in creating a friendly community in the area. I've gotten to know many others in my community through activities like the amazing puzzle race. When I was new to this community, the library is a place I felt at home. The staff always listen and encourage us to share our thoughts on how to make the library better. Altoona Public Library is the only library in the area that I attend because of how caring and in tune it is with the community. Please continue to support this library!!!

I don't use the library as often as I once did, but I feel so fortunate to have access to such a wide variety of books right at my fingertips through the MORE system. As an avid reader, my library card makes it so much easier for me to keep reading, and take chances on books I'm not sure about without having to buy the book. I am in a couple different book clubs, and

grateful to the library for making that easy. I also wanted to add that even though my children are grown now, when they were young we LIVED at the library and I loved all of the rental services available, which I believe continue to expand. Not just books, but DVDs, and puppets! We attended many activities when the kids were pre-school and elementary school age. We signed up for every summer reading challenge. And we checked out so many books! I like to think I set my kids up to be great readers thanks to their easy access to so many books at the Altoona library.

Thank you for this vital resource!

AMERY

The library has always been such an influential part of my life as well as the community as a whole. Through programs like morning story times and summer reading challenges, the library encourages **early literacy** as well as teaches important lessons in empathy, communication, and social interaction. Having participated in library events all my life, the library has always felt like home. My favorite aspect of the library has always been the friendly and encouraging workers. From helping me out of a reading slump to finding specific books for school, the librarians are so amazing and passionate about their work. Specifically, this year, I had been looking for books to accomplish reading goals for a Global Scholars program through my school. When I asked the worker for a recommendation for a book set in a different culture, she was extremely helpful in finding me multiple options and giving me her personal rating and synopsis of each book. With her help, I was able to accomplish my goal and achieve the **Global Scholars award**. The library is such an amazing asset to our town and to have such wonderful workers who organize events and are so knowledgeable in what they do is very important in establishing a well-educated and united community. – Cora W

I am a single mother of 2, currently enrolled in my senior year of a Biomedical and Health Sciences program at UW-River Falls. My children are ages 10.5 years and 4 months old.

The library has been an incredibly helpful and often critical resource in my education. I've been so grateful to have **access to computers, printers and internet** at times

where those things may not have otherwise been available to me. Without the library, I'd have often had to pack up the children to drive to my school an hour away to be able to complete homework.

Thanks to our hometown library, as well as the university library, I've had access to materials and writings on the subjects I'm learning about in school in order to effectively complete my school work and expand my learning in my chosen career path.

I've been able to research what program to enroll in, register for classes, and look into graduate programs and continuing education options while at our local library. I'm excited to say I'm graduating in May and moving on to the next step.

They provide access to tools needed to stay organized (3-hole punches, staplers, etc.). We also participate in many of the organized activities for the children (decorating cookies, learning about other cultures, storytime, 3d printing, coloring/arts and crafts in makerspace, etc.). These expand my children's world and give them experiences with things we may not otherwise ever encounter and make them feel a part of our community as they play and socialize with other local children.

We are participating in baby bees and the 1000 books before kindergarten programs with my youngest. The library gives me access to the materials to be able to complete these challenges and to help support my infant's **early literacy skills**. It gives my daughter access to materials that interest her and keeps her engaged in reading and in school. Our library also provides a **safe, climate-controlled place** to let the kids work out some energy on hot summer days and cold winter ones, too. They have access to wonderful toys that help expand their imaginations and developmentally appropriate skills for a wide variety of ages. We are so grateful to have such a wonderful library in our small community and are so grateful for the MORE system that allows sharing between libraries to give us access to materials our local libraries don't have.

Big thanks to our local librarians and all the work they do to keep this fantastic resource

available to our community, ourselves and our children. - *Kimberlie May*

We're a single-income homeschooling family. The library has been pivotal in our family- from checking out hundreds of books to attending events, we use library services literally every day. We deeply appreciate the Amery and New Richmond locations, the welcoming and **knowledgeable staff** there, and the large network of libraries that allows us to typically locate books we want to read for pleasure or include in our homeschooling journey. Without the library, we wouldn't be able to read and experience even a fraction of these books if we had to buy them on our own. Our kids love the kits and technology they can check out as well. We're currently in line for a couple 3D printed items at Amery- how fun!

Finding resources to help my daughter at home with her education.

I am not going to indicate one particular library; in every place I've lived each library offered a safe place to browse, learn, converse and sometimes have coffee/cookies. Sometimes a "seed" exchange library for gardeners, writing groups, movie nights, thoughtful discussions and ways to grow.

Libraries are integral to the fabric of our society. An informed citizen is the backbone and will not tolerate obvious manipulation. It is merely my opinion, I understand, however at a library all subjects are available. All aspects of a topic can be researched. In short, Libraries are an invaluable resource for everyone regardless of age, gender, race or creed. Libraries help us be better.

The first thing I did when I retired and moved to Polk County eight years ago was to get a library card. Since then, I've read hundreds of books that I can conveniently check out from my library or any of the MORE libraries in the system. Without this service, I would have to travel to the Twin Cities to get books as we do not have book stores in our area. In addition to checking out books, the libraries offer events for seniors and kids and host authors for book signings or talks. **Libraries are valuable to small communities** and should be generously funded.

I am so thankful for our local library. Spending time there with my children over the years has made it so they all have a love for reading. We

enjoy all the free family and children's programs. I'm thankful that we can request books from many different libraries which makes it possible for my friends and I to have a monthly book club. I'm also thankful for the movies that we can check out for our weekly pizza and movie night with our family. We Love our library ❤️

AUGUSTA

I have lived in Augusta, WI since 1988. As a mother of three daughters we utilized our local library often when they were growing up. Augusta Memorial library has offered great programs for all ages as long as I can remember. Always something going on for the kids as well as adults. I recently joined a book club. I have fond memories taking my granddaughter to the library when she was visiting. Now that I am retired, I read even more and love the convenience of having such a great library in our small town. I prefer to hold a book in my hands rather than read a digital version. The Director and staff are amazing. We need to support our libraries for our future generations. – *Beth Anderson*

My Dad, who was from rural Wisconsin (Star Neva), as a kid, got shared library books in a crate every few weeks from a local library (Anitgo). He read EVERYTHING. When I was old enough, he took me to our local library in Milwaukee (Villard Ave branch) and got me my "Junior" library card. "OK kid... here is the world". Weekly visits. And then joy of joys, the BOOKMOBILE stopped a block from our house!! The Librarian was encouraging and helpful: "take as many books as you want!" My library card, and the people who stood behind it, resulted in a lifetime of joyous READING!!! **There is no greater resource...** – *Linda Spaciel*

The Augusta Library was a short walk from my childhood home. I remember spending hours searching for stacks of books to take home and read. I don't recall there being after school programs back then. 30+ years later I moved back to the area and worked at the library. The Augusta Library instilled in me a lifetime love of learning, joy of reading and dream job as a librarian. I've since moved away but the public library changed my life. With all the fun and educational programs libraries offer today (for all ages) and the services such as free **computer and S.T.E.A.M. clubs**, libraries

open doors to opportunities for young and old alike. I am so thankful for the amazing librarians who serve in libraries of all sizes across Wisconsin. Thank you for all that you do! – *Stacey Brown*

Don't get me wrong--I love bookstores; I always have, and I always will. But no bookstore could ever fill the role that the library plays in my life, and the lives of so many like me. I would have to be a millionaire to purchase all the library-provided books that have been my friends, educators, and inspirations since early childhood. And they're free! Any American, from any walk of life, can pay the same price--nothing--for a book that may change her life. If that's not democracy at its finest, I don't know what is. And the library isn't just about books: It's also about community. When I moved to Augusta, the first friends my son and I made were made at the Library Story Times.

Whether I was greeting a familiar face in the stacks or discussing a new book with the Book Club, the Library has always given me a sense of home. My son practically grew up there, and it gave him a **safe place to go after school** when he was too old for daycare but too young to be home alone until his father and I came home from work. Years later, his first job was as a Junior Clerk at the Library. I should also mention that movies from the Library have been a staple for our Friday Family Movie Nights. Because the Augusta Memorial Public Library has given so much to me, I felt honor bound to give something back by serving as Secretary on its Board. In my role as a Board member, but also in my roles as a mother, a reader, and a taxpayer, I fully support government funding for public libraries.

Because libraries provide so many resources--including social groups and materials that can be lifesavers for parents of young children--I think few tax dollars could be better spent than those spent on public libraries. – *Rebecca White Body*

Our local library provides us with most of our entertainment including movies (DVDs), music (CDs), magazines and books for fun. All of our librarians are willing to **help us find whatever we are looking for** and can't locate at our library or through the MORE system. Of course, we also read books to increase our knowledge and broaden our horizons. When my husband was young and

getting beat at checkers consistently by his dad, he headed to his local library in Manitowoc and checked out a book on checkers' strategy. After that he was consistently winning! Since then, he's used the library to figure out how to do things from fixing cars to tuning a piano. We both take advantage of the interesting programs, and I enjoy getting together with the library sponsored book club. We especially love our library, but also love the concept of libraries, places where all are welcome to learn and socialize. When travelling throughout our country, we like to check out the local libraries to get a flavor of the community. Our tax money is well spent in supporting our free libraries, one of the best things about our country. – *Karen Winter Norris*

Our small town library is a welcoming space for any who visit. It is clear that the staff love to serve this community and have maintained a robust service despite budget cuts. They are also a warm place that provides emergency meals when the food pantry is not open. They have a lovely garden space outside that extends beyond the building. Our family has enjoyed this library for more than 30 years!

BALDWIN

As a genealogist, I enjoy and appreciate the 24/7 library services which gives me access to on-line census records and the Find a Grave sites. In the fall, I was able to share how to access and use those services as I taught three individuals at the Hammond Library. I'm looking forward to repeating these classes at the Woodville and Baldwin Libraries. I've also been able to share my love of Monarch butterflies by doing workshops at the libraries. And even better, Leah Langby helped me to produce a video on How to Raise a Monarch. – *Mary Ellen Brue*

BALSAM LAKE

We bought a rustic little cabin in the middle of nowhere (Balsam Lake area!) and spent our first summer there. We were new to WI and I felt compelled to reread all of the Laura Ingalls Wilderness “Little House on the Prairie” books because I felt very connected to her in the “big woods”. 😊 My sweet public library kept me well supplied through the whole series and beyond. The books were just as good as I

remember them from my original reading 50 years ago, but experiencing them from an adult perspective was unique. Thank you and kudos to the Balsam Lake Public Library! ❤️

- Jane Lenser

I moved to Balsam Lake in 2009 and the first thing I did was obtain my library card. I go to all the libraries in Polk County regularly. I have been a volunteer board member on the BL Library board for over 10 years and have enjoyed my service to the community. The MORE system allows access to over 50 libraries in Wisconsin and that alone makes my card extremely **valuable** for ordering books, DVDs, and music. The dedicated employees are a real asset to the area. They continue to promote exciting new events and host gatherings for all ages. They serve everyone with enthusiasm, respect and the very best customer service available anywhere in Polk County! – *David Muller*

I am a widow with no family. I regularly request books from The MORE system. I feel that Linda and Rebekah know me and always make me feel valued.

I love to read and too frugal to pay for books. The library offers me a plethora of books that I have already paid for. It is just a matter of waiting, which is fine by me. The Libby app is additionally a great resource that I use often. My library also features authors that come to Balsam Lake to speak...AND you can even borrow snowshoes and other outdoor items there. I had no idea! - *Stephanie Hinrichs*

BARRON

As a single mom, I couldn't afford to take my kids places when they were young so I would take them to the library on a regular basis. They fell in love with books and reading. They really enjoyed picking out books and we'd even check out movies to watch together. And when they grew up and had kids of their own, they did the same thing with their kids. All those trips to the library paid off! - *Corita Pressley*

The library offers so much to **support to people in the community**. My favorite part of the library is the unlimited access to knowledge, and the wonderful community it creates. – *Alyssa*

As a parent I truly love that the library is a **safe place where my kids can go and hang**

out with books and friends. They enjoy the crafts provided and playing the games on the computers.

BLOOMER

My kids and I love going to the library and try to do so at least once a week for new books. We try to attend any craft times or parties that are age appropriate. I do miss the weekly craft packets they used to do every Monday morning, my kids loved doing the crafts.

Believe it or not, I was a young student when the Bloomer library was built and opened. I remember taking a field trip there where we all got our own library cards. It wasn't until years later, when I became a nanny for a local family that I began to frequent the library regularly. At that time, programming was minimal and inconsistent. It took time, but gradually the library staff was able to provide more and more to our community. The programs became plentiful and the selection filled out. I'm so proud of our little library! Adding the MORE system was phenomenal for our rural area... we still make holds all the time. After raising my kids in the library (storytime, homeschool group, after school programming) where we each needed our own library bags to carry all our books, I primarily use LIBBY for audiobooks on my days off of work. I'm ever so grateful for this free, high-quality app. It fills my need for a story while I get things done at home. I don't know what I'd do without all the free services our little library has provided! – *Janelle*

I am a Benefit Navigator with a Federally funded Community Health Center. For the past 3 years I have been using the libraries throughout the area to do outreach sessions, meet with consumers to enroll them in different programs such as Medicaid, Badger Care, Food Share HealthCare.gov plus other programs such as the Food Share, AODA programs, Behavioral and Mental Health Services, Dental Services, Food Pantries, Open Door Clinics. The Director's and the staff at every library go above and beyond to ensure that my consumers have a much privacy as needed for all the sensitive information that needs to be shared. They have opened early to allow me to meet with someone, stayed late. Plus, all the posting on Facebook, their websites, making signs and posters. All the staff at the libraries care deeply about bringing

the library to the community and doing all they can to bring services that maybe the community didn't know was needed but once that service is at that library it is used! Without a library a community is missing a heart! - *Billie White*

Stacy has been extremely helpful in helping the Bloomer Senior Citizens Center set up our Facebook account. They have been right there for me whenever I have a problem or question. - *Florence Lambert*

Our library is small, but the resources it has for the community are great. Story time is well attended, and the **librarians are always helpful**. With 3 teenage boys in the house, it's difficult to find books that they'd be willing to read but our librarians seem to always know what direction to point them. Often times our little library doesn't have the book on hand so being able to pull from other local libraries has been essential. There tends to be a lot of the same authors on hand- it would be nice to have more variety. The teen section is a favorite in our house. Comfy couch and chairs. We're thankful for our little library.

I love this system and the **library staff is so helpful** all the time.

I have not used the Bloomer Library a lot in past years but in the last couple years they have provided some very useful classes on "getting older" and information that can make this process easier and healthier. I also like the book shelves that have books for sale all the time. Sometimes I find books that I know I won't be able to read right away but they are in my possession at an affordable cost to read later. I have borrowed books from the library which is more "budget wise" than buying them. The Librarians are always so friendly and helpful. **Thank you for providing an excellent community service.** - *Veda Reed*

I am so grateful for our local library. It has helped me meet people and make connections. I've seen students I have taught in the past at the library and have been able to check in with them and support them when needed. I've been able to lead sessions at the library to help community members of all ages learn stress relief strategies.

I've attended classes at the library to learn all sorts of skills, and **have shared many classes with senior neighbors and family members on computer skills,**

dementia, retirement and so much more. The library is such an important backbone of our community, especially when we have to drive 30 minutes to access and learn about other county services.

The library is one of the only places that is free. It's a place for parents, kids, teens, book lovers, business owners, seniors, and literally everyone to go. We no longer have a bowling alley, a staffed beach, and there are limited things to do in our community. The library gives people an outlet, a place to connect, and feel better.

The library brings in so many community services into our rural area. Speech services for young children, after school programming so **kids have a safe place to be**, tax help for citizens, health programs from Mayo Clinic and local businesses, how to choose healthcare in retirement, and so much more. Without these services so many community members would not know where to turn, or what to do.

Please continue to support our libraries. I am more than happy to pay taxes for services that directly benefit my community, and the library pays out to me in so many ways.

We love our library and our librarian. She is full of good ideas etc, etc, etc. The library has different subjects for us retirees and I love it. I might even read a book someday. :) *Judy Scritsmier*

I work in the School District of Bloomer and the GE Bleskacek Family Memorial Library is an **amazing community partner!!** From participating in child find activities to opening their doors to students, staff, and families for a wide variety of reasons, I love how bridges are built between home, library, school, and the community at large.

I appreciate the high quality story hour that is offered in Bloomer. The children are lucky to have the weekly opportunity to interact with other children and the parents benefit from visiting with each other and the suggestions provided by the librarians. The input from the SLP who partners with the library is wonderful and helps parents know about typical development of speech topics.

CHETEK

We have been using the Chetek library for a few years now. The staff is always friendly, Carol was always helpful and when she retired, Emily came on board. She's very friendly and stops what she's doing for a chat. Knows us by name and a few of the other staff recognize us too. I think that's what makes our library so special. We come for Beneficial Bites and are getting to some others in the community. I like when they have programs during the day with different speakers on topics that are interesting to me. I have used the library for **faxing and making copies** so that is helpful too. Grateful that we have such a wonderful library. Thank you to Emily and her staff for making us feel welcome. – *Joyce*

When my spouse passed in the spring of 2023, I was a lost soul searching for a smile or a kind gesture. One of the places I was able to find that was at our library in Chetek. Was there an opportunity for me to volunteer? Yes, and I made a connection. It was so helpful to me! Thank you, Emily, and thank you Calhoun Memorial Library for being a place where all are welcome! – *Sally*

I love that all the staff are so helpful whenever my daughter and I come in. I have books on reserve quite a bit and they recognize me when I am walking up to the building and sometimes have the books ready for me right when I walk in. Such a gem in the community! – *Amy*

Reading books came from my family of book lovers. Some read for escape, knowledge, learning a new craft, cooking, travel and more. The Calhoun Library in Chetek is a hidden treasure. My mom loved to read and on Sundays would see the books that people were reading. She would have me order them for her. She loved the library and staff. Now I am using the library to read books and its many programs. I enjoy the Try It Group, Beneficial Bites, Wit and Wisdom. It expands my mind and creativity. This library has a big heart with all the other programs it offers to the community of Chetek. – *Deb Keech*

My husband and I moved to Chetek in 2012. We used the library for internet access until we were connected and enjoyed the staff there so much. I love to read and used the library often. During covid the staff was great about putting my book order outside in the bins for me to pick up. I joined the Friends of the Library as a member and at some point received an email asking if I would be interested in joining the

FOL board, I went to a meeting and signed up. I am now secretary of the FOL board. I have always enjoyed picking up the books I order online. The staff is always so friendly. Last fall I joined the book club. It has gotten me to read authors I wouldn't normally have read and I look forward to each meeting. Good company and good conversation. I did move to Rice Lake but Calhoun Memorial Library is still my library. – *Lauri Engness*

My love of the library started at a very early age. This was a place that allowed me to discover new worlds and expand my love for learning and reading. I found this place to be inviting and so interesting, from the customers to the workers. As I grew up my appreciation for the library took on new meaning. This was a place that I could receive help from librarians, knowledge of new adventures and use of technology. After becoming a mother, the library, again, took on new meaning. I loved to watch my children discover new books and their excitement when entering this magical place! Finally, after moving the library has allowed me to feel part of a new community. The library allows me to connect to others with volunteering and visiting this place. I can't think of a better place to spend some time and appreciate the awesomeness that a library truly is. – *Emily D'Angelo*

We enjoy our library. We have craft time and teen time that make it so fun, as well as summer activities. Friendly, helpful staff and Emily has done so much amazing stuff for the library! If you need a certain book, they will help you find it. We appreciate Emily so much.

Beyond books, our local library provides other media and **access to technology**. High school students are even available to teach tech skills and troubleshoot problems. The staff is welcoming and works to provide programs for all age groups!

CHIPPEWA FALLS

The library enhances my in-home childcare greatly! Preschool story times give littles an opportunity to connect with others not in our school and respectfully listen to other adults. They grow independence and reading skills through picking weekly books which come to school. And learning is enhanced from an amazing selection of books prepared for us to match our learning each month at school. Not only is it amazing for our program but my

family and children love it as well. We are grateful for the resource and appreciate the amazing support staff to connect with and help us out! - *Learning 4 Life, community business*

Growing up in the country, and being homeschooled, my parents focused myself and my sisters on reading. We would read for hours. One day, we went to the library for an event, and looked around the library for things to read. That day, my sisters and I managed to load all the books to the front and check out with our youth librarian. We were told that it was the first time someone tried to check out 102 books one card. After that, they had to cap the books you could check out thanks to my sisters and I. - *Lucy C*

When I was a child in the 1960s, the library was where I went after school until my parents could pick me up. Then it became the place I studied in college. After having kids, it's where I took my kids to open up new worlds to them. My son loved to read and I couldn't keep ahead of him. In any case, they both have the gift of loving to learn and curiosity, which I attribute to exposure to the library. Now, as a semi-retired person, I love to cross stitch, so I use the library's copier to print patterns, and I listen to audio books while I stitch. I've introduced many people to the programs at libraries like spice of the month, art for seniors, death cafe, the library of things and the MORE library system. A few of my favorites! - *Teresa Ritzinger*

The Chippewa Falls Library has been essential in fostering the love of reading for my children. They have been able to socially interact with other kids, learn to attend to whole group environments led by a teacher, and grown their curiosity. My kids were very active from the time they were babies, at attending the reading groups/read alouds held here. They learned how to sit and listen. They learned about taking turns and sharing their opinions. The most crucial thing is they were able to discover that books can teach them things and allow them to explore. My children did not go to daycare, as family was able to help out. The library allowed them many opportunities. Now as they grow, the library allows them to extend their learning, and get off of gaming/youtube. - *Stephanie Cowell*

Our family loves our public library! It has wonderful resources for my children. Such fun

toys and events. They love storytime! They learn a lot and make new friends.

Loose Parts on Tuesdays is my favorite!

Playing toys with my friends is my favorite!

We come play and read and sing and I LOVE IT!

I am a distance education student at UW Madison's PA program. This program requires weekly proctoring for exams. The Chippewa Falls library is the only library in the region that offers students proctoring services with dedicated spaces free of charge. Krister, the Information Services Coordinator, and the Chippewa Falls Public Library have been super accommodating and **instrumental to my success as a student**. Their services are greatly appreciated, and I can not thank them enough. - *Austin Loomis*

I get all my reading material here. Why wouldn't a person take advantage of a place where you can read books for free. Everyone is so friendly and helpful. The library has, or can get, anything you want to read. Public libraries are extremely important for the public to have access to reading materials. Thank You for being here.

Books have always been important to my life. My parents introduced my siblings and I to the adventures found in books early on. Books stir imagination, introduce diversity of thinking, and educate and entertain. This library (Chippewa) and Eau Claire provide community, a **safe place** that doesn't charge a penny for the wonder of books or a need for internet connectivity. The classes are wonderfully curated, and, again, provide intros to new experiences. Libraries are an important part of a democratic and free country. Ban book banning! - *Kristi Prior*

COLFAX

The Wisconsin library system is an EXTREMELY vital resource for us all. It does not discriminate on economic status nor race or color or creed.

My personal experiences are vast. I came to Wisconsin in the 90s from California. From day one I felt included and heard. My first library in Wisconsin was the Menomonie one. As a single mom, it was extremely vital in seeking resources that didn't cost anything. It also was a source of free entertainment. I took

my kids there to see Santa for the first time, rent vhs tapes, and to assist with homework projects. For a long time **we didn't have a computer so we used the Menomonie location for school projects or to look for jobs.** Not one time did we encounter a crabby library worker. They always have made me feel welcome. They offer refuge for those of us that need a mental break from annoying husbands lol, a place to find resources to better ourselves, and a place to stimulate our minds. They also put on the most amazing and FREE programs.

My heart and soul belong to the libraries of Wisconsin. I have never felt a sense of feeling of community in California like I have in Wisconsin. We all need to do what we can to support the libraries of Wisconsin. - *Moe D.*

The library has helped my 6-year-old fall in love with books. I first started bringing him and all he wanted to do was play with the toys. Now he wants to go to the library to pick out books to read at home. He still plays with the toys, but he gives opinions on books he wants to bring home. As soon as we arrive home he digs into the books. We have built his library at home even more because he now wants a book (and a toy) when we go shopping. The library has created a new love for my son. One that will help him far beyond his youth.

Jolene is so great with the children in our community. She always remembers their names and has crafts for them to do. She is also very helpful in finding books for us adults!

The library has saved me so much money throughout my reading goal. I have borrowed multiple books using my library card. Books help me escape to locations I've never been. I've also access books about world wars to learn more about history.

I like the toys there and coloring stuff. I like the books, especially the Pokémon books. I like the library nights where we do painting. - *Roy and Henry*

Not a big story to share but I so enjoy being able to go into the library to put hands on a book to view, choose, and ultimately read. I've used this library for interlibrary loans. - *Mary Stencil*

Being in our 80's but still active, reading is one of our favorite winter pastimes. Our library supplies us with 1-3 books each a week. In addition, we can meet in person, some of our favorite authors. Lots of activities that we can take our grandkids too also. Ot also gives us a chance to meet with our friends and play mahjonn! Love our Cumberland library!! - *Stanley and Sharon Adler*

Always so helpful and great crafts for kids to do

I'm a fellow library worker who is being mentored by Jeanette through our library system, and I really appreciate the insight and enthusiasm she has for the work she does at her library. I see the flyers and holiday cards she and her staff make, and they're all so thoughtful and fun. I can't wait to continue this mentorship. - *Darien B., librarian*

Our library is an essential asset to the community of Cumberland. They provide numerous educational and cultural opportunities for our adults and youth, many of which would not be available without the library resource. The small amount of public funding that supports our library does not compare to the benefits and resources the library provides to the community. Please continue to support it. - *Jim Connell*

I LOVE our library and have my entire life. It helped set me and my family on a path to being life-long readers (voraciously so!). It is warm, welcoming, and a crowning gem of our community.

The Thomas St Angelo Library is the crown jewel of Cumberland's main street. When visitors come and we tour the area it is always one of the places we bring people and they are always impressed that we have such a wonderful facility in our little town, and of all of the services the As a parent I truly love that the library is a **safe place where my kids can go and hang out** with books and friends. provides. From children's programs, arts and craft classes, a " Library of Things" that people can check out, **access to computers and Wifi**, to many books and periodicals and videos available to borrow and much more, our library truly serves the needs of the community. It is so much more than a library, it is a community center! - *board member*

I don't think I can really overstate the importance and level of positive influence our library has in our community. They have worked

CUMBERLAND

incredibly hard to grow and adapt to the changing needs of our town. It has become an extremely **valuable community resource** that is available to everyone from pre-school on up.

From a large area dedicated to family activities and learning opportunities to well-stocked shelves of every genre to an excellent collection dedicated to the history of our area, there is something for everyone here.

The staff is dedicated, knowledgeable, and incredibly helpful. If you can't find what you are looking for, they will go above and beyond to get it for you.

We use our library a lot, usually visiting at least weekly, sometimes twice or three times a week. Our grandkids love it as well. This place is an integral part of our community, it would be impossible to put a value on the impact it has on the people here. - *Robyn and Allen Jones*

DEER PARK

I love my library! I frequent the Deer Park Library, Clear Lake Library, and New Richmond Library. I am able to check out books that entertain and books that teach. We do not have the internet at home so I am so thankful they have **computers that are available for patrons**. We also love that we can check out hotspots and the Roku. These items help us with our day-to-day necessities. The library staff are helpful with book selection and are willing to help with research as needed. Our 4-H club has been able to use the Deer Park Library's Community Room free of charge. This allows us to continue to raise the next generation of leaders as well as provide support and community service opportunities for our local community! Thank you for your past and future support of our local libraries! They mean so much to our local community! - *Lori DeBoet*

Friendly and helpful! A lot of books and other things like movies, puzzles, and kids stuff. - *Wendi*

EAU CLAIRE

Me and three other girls formed a book club around seven years ago, and each month, I use

the library to check out the next book we're reading. I forgot my library card one day when I was picking up my book on hold, and the librarian kindly suggested downloading the library app to use in the future if that happens again. I downloaded the app and have used it to look up the books available at the library and submit holds on my next ones to read. I love that the library has expanded to offer other items for renting besides books. I know not everyone enjoys reading, so this makes it where there's a little something for everyone. Most recently, I decided I wanted to learn more about my profession but can't afford to go back to school, so I went to the library in search of non-fiction books that could help me. I've always seen a library as a **safe space** and I hope they continue to be that way in the future.

This story goes back to the year 2003. I was a teenager. I had recently come into the term transgender (i am a trans woman) and needed more information. Now, this was 2003. Finding any information on the internet required a great deal of skill back then, and finding information on topics like being transgender was especially difficult.

so, i walked into the adult side of the library, and walked up to librarian. I have no idea what her name was at this point in my life. I just remember i was living in wisconsin rapids. So I walk up to this woman. "can i help you?" she asked. "yes", i said, as i wrote the word 'transgender' down on a piece of paper and slid it over to her like i was passing contraband. She grabbed it with a look of confusion, read it, and then her look softened into a face of sympathy. She immediately put her glasses on and started looking up information and writing numbers down from the dewey decimal system. As she slid it back to me, she had this look of sad compassion in her eyes, like she knew how hard my life was about to become. But she simply said "good luck, kiddo" and gave me a sad smile.

She sent me to some science journals that discussed HRT, different surgeries, and basic medical information that had been gathered at that point in our history. The final book was 'Gender Outlaw (1995)' by Kate Bornstein.

That librarian saved my life and was the first human i ever admitted i was transgender to, even if it was just on a slip of paper. This is

why we need librarians. Its their duty to hold the knowledge of the world so that people can find that information and make their lives better. i will forever be grateful to that woman.
- *Shyla McKee*

We LOVE the library!!! Starting almost 14 years ago with story time opportunities with an infant, then toddler, then schoolager, and now teen, having the ability to meet with other local families, build a love of reading, and utilize all of the amazing resources available has been so incredibly wonderful for our family. From one-on-one help from a librarian to discover books on a wide range of topics, to large events featuring favorite characters, to dabble box opportunities to explore new areas of interest, and finally to using the new space as a location for mindfulness/meditation retreats, our lives are enriched by all of the activities offered. We love seeing the BookBike at the Farmer's Market on Saturdays throughout the summer too. Regardless of age, interest, ability, there is always something going on that brings people together. There is SOOOOOOOO much to love about our library.

I regularly use the library to access books and DVDs that would cost too much elsewhere. Our library staff are always cheerful and willing to help with whatever I need. My 94-year-old father goes to the library once or twice a week. When I was a child, he took my sister and me almost every weekend. I cannot imagine life without my library. - *Julia Browne*

ELLSWORTH

The library impacts our homeschool family tremendously! I cannot share enough how much we appreciate the wide selection of books we are able to check out to aid us with book study's, free reading, or even helping mom know what she's doing. We love the events the library puts on for the kids and adults, creating freely in the maker space, and toys available to keep littles busy while the bigger kids are picking out books or finishing projects. **The staff at the Ellsworth library is unmatched.** They are always positive and willing to assist you with anything you need.

A patron came in and spent the entire day, and as they were leaving they thanked us and said we were a life saver for them today. They work from home and **their internet was out** and they had meetings, deadlines and lots to get

done. They were able to spend their whole work day at our library and managed to complete everything on their to do list.

I love going to this library, everyone is so friendly, if I'm searching for a book, they know exactly where to find it, or helping me order a new book. I took my grandchildren to story time for years, they loved it. - *Kelly Kinneman*

I loved reading and the library as a kid, but due to high school and college stopped reading for pleasure throughout my teens and twenties. I rediscovered my love of reading a few years ago, but it was an expensive hobby and I couldn't afford to buy as many books as I wanted to read, even at used stores. Other state library systems made it a challenge to find what I wanted and I gave up.

Upon moving to WI, and becoming a member of the library system here, the possibilities became endless. By using the app to add myself to the waiting list for books I want, I am never at a loss for what to read. The shipment of books from other libraries near us is genius and makes reading attainable for all, even newer releases. I don't have time to come comb through the shelves like I used to enjoy as a kid, but I do have a minute to stop by and pick the books waiting for me off the shelf. Reading books is so important, and many people don't realize the benefits you miss when reading on a device. Reading has beneficial effects on cognition. Just thirty minutes daily improves vocabulary, concentration, empathy, social and emotional intelligence, problem-solving skills, critical thinking and deep reasoning. It is a vital skill and admirable hobby that should be attainable for all. Someday I hope life slows down and I am able to participate in the social events at the library. I think it is a great place to find community and connection with like-minded people. But, in the meantime, I will enjoy a brief chat with my friendly librarian and the wonderful benefit of books my library provides.

We love the library. The people who work there are very helpful and always greet us when we come in. Thankfully we can order books that are not there. We enjoy the different historical articles and displays. We also check out puzzles along with books. We feel at home and enjoy just being there.

The MORE consortium and the Ellsworth Public Library are the two top things that I like about

Ellsworth, WI. This library system allows me to try many different books and authors on a number of topics. For me this is educational and supports my do-it-myself lifestyle with informational material. Also, it is my primary source of entertainment on a daily basis. As a senior citizen, I worked very hard for many years and now can take it a bit easy and really enjoy reading books in the evening - thanks to the Ellsworth Public Library system. Also, the occasional jigsaw puzzle I check out is great for healthy stress relief and a little good clean family fun. I could go on, but to summarize, please know what a treasure the library is for the Ellsworth, WI community. - *Melanie Schoepp*

I love the Ellsworth Public Library! L-O-V-E! L is for the lovely people who work there. They are always kind, friendly, and make my visits a sweet little social outing. O is for outstanding services. Crystal very often helps me find items that are not in the MORE catalog. I always have rabbit holes I go down ; there's always something I need help from her to find. She's my wing woman and she's the TOP GUN of the Ellsworth Library, if you ask me. V is for veritable choices. Since they moved into the new building there is so much more to choose from, and space to add new materials that are coming out. It's fantastic! Plus the MORE catalog means there are endless ways to get items. I love the choices. I can go online and basically shop for free through all the items I can borrow from the public library. It's awesome! E is for everyone in our town; everyone can take advantage of all the wonderful options that are offered. Robin is a knock out coming up with events for patrons to attend and participate in. I have had some really fun chats with her about her ideas, and have given her a couple of my own to mull over for use. She's very enthusiastic about it and is working hard to make those plans come to fruition. She is amazing!

Another point I need to impress on you is a very personal one from my own family of four. Last school year my daughter was a senior in high school. She's autistic and gets a lot of help from county services. One of those services, last year, was set up to help her attain real world job skills for herself so she can enter the workforce after graduation. The Ellsworth Public Library allowed for my kid to come and do a paid internship with them for a period of time. It was a wonderful, positive experience

for my girl. She worked mainly in the children's library. Everyone in that department gave her nothing but good support. Our family is very grateful our oldest got to have that time there and learn so much. It's literally a village pulling together to help a person in the community when they need it most; helping to raise a kid into a socially graceful and hard-working member of the adult world. Our family appreciates that effort more than words can say. There is a serious shortage of such opportunities for people with spectrum disorders. When someone is willing, able, and happy to help, offer a chance, to grow, and expand for one of those people it's life changing. Literally, the ripple effect from that goes out forever, for that person's lifetime, truly. Our daughter enjoyed it so much that even after the internship was finished, she stayed on as a volunteer for the rest of the year. She got even more experience under her belt and was really happy to have that.

Thank you Ellsworth Public Library for doing such revolutionary work in this community! I'm excited to see what 2025 holds. I'm hopeful I can participate in tons of programs! - *Nikki Pizza*

My toddler and I look forward to Fridays when we get to see Ms. Caroline for story time. The theme is always cute and creative. My daughter makes something to bring back home to show her dad. Ms. Caroline always spends a little time with each child and you can tell she really cares. We've gone to multiple different libraries around and this is by far our favorite! - *Cassie, Mia, and Leo*

I enjoy using the Libby App to read books. I also enjoy different programs and activities the library hosts such as houseplants 101, mystery quilt, Spanish classes, etc. - *Linda Hamilton*

We moved here from Utah in 2020. One of my biggest challenges was no longer having a network of people and resources I'd grown up with. The library is the number one place that has helped me get reconnected with my community via story time events and meeting other moms who told me about other activities and programs, like the Family Resource Center.

I also homeschool so we've relied on the ability to go to another setting of learning with other children each week and have been profoundly grateful for the above and beyond efforts Mrs.

Caroline does to make things fun and educational. The summer events she has done has been especially memorable like showing us where "Cairns Woods" is (a local public walking park enveloped in the quiet woods) I would have never found on my own. She coordinates with so many others in the community like the Post office, Dentists, horsemen, farmers, veterinarians, firefighters, policemen and even brings her pet hedgehog twice a year.

Caroline has played a very influential role in a portion of my children's homeschool; so much so that she took part in my son's "Joy School" graduation a year ago.

The other librarians are ALL very friendly, talkative and helpful. They each show an interest in my kids and never act in a hurry even though I know they are busy. The readathons have been great to participate in and make reading extra fun as well with marking it off each day and receiving a coupon from the Pizza arcade.

We love this **safe environment for our children** to mingle with other kids and continue their education and it's been key in building my community network again. Thank you! - *Sara Mike*

I have been bringing my daughters to the library about once or twice a week for the past year now. My oldest daughter was struggling learning how to talk. We were able to check out so many books that she enjoyed and the more I read to her, the better her speech became. Now my youngest daughter is starting to talk and we still read library books every day!

We also enjoy other opportunities our library offers including story time, puzzles, toys and the crafts in the maker space. The library offers us a fun environment to enjoy during the long cold winter months.

I pondered over what I could write that would convey the importance of my local library. I am a widowed senior citizen with a compassion to help those less fortunate than myself who lives alone in the Village of Ellsworth. On my way through my kitchen, I glanced at the calendar hanging there that contains my social engagements, my appointments, and birthdays and anniversaries of friends and family. There was my answer! In this coming week alone, four of the five "events" I will participate in

would not be possible without my local library. I will be treated to a dinner theater made possible by my library partnering with our local Aging and Disability Resource Center. Midweek, with the help of a trained artist, I'll be able to reflect on how the COVID pandemic affected me while letting my creative side share my story with others. The library's book club encourages me to read books that I might not otherwise read affording me the opportunity to learn new things and then discuss those learned things with my peers. And, Friday through one of my library's outreach programs, I'll do "art" with the residents of an assisted living home and a medical care facility giving them the attention they crave and me another purpose in life. Additionally, I am a volunteer for the Salvation Army and our library provides me with a safe place to meet with people in crisis when a face-to-face visit is necessary. I'm both surprised by and appreciative of how many individuals in need seek the library for a place to rest, to have a beverage, to peruse the library's display rack of potential assistance sources, and speak with the library staff. In short, my library is my lifeline to the community.

ELK MOUND

Support from the staff at the Elk Mound library - especially Monica - is incredible! They help my family find books and keep us reading and off of screens! **I am grateful for our public libraries and what they do for communities, especially our children and families!!**

We exclusively use Elk Mound public library. It is truly a great avenue in our town for children and adults. Thank you so much. We love it there. - *Monica*

I love any and all books! I love to read! - *Camden Hahn*

Our local Elk Mound library is an amazing resource. It helps instill a love for reading for all. My three children would not be the avid readers they are without the availability of so many books! - *Annie Kongshaug*

I love books and playing!

Coloring and playing games with my family.

Lots of books.

Great Librarian!

There are Dragon Master books!

I like all the books.

I love my library because of the service and availability to access other libraries. A fine place. :-)
Debbie

I love all the movies. - *Jacob Goettl*

We like watching movies. - *Jamie Goettl*

I love...All the books and games the library shares. - *Amy Meyer*

Because my daughter has a **safe place to play and explore books.** - *Valerie Andrews*

We love Elk Mound Library! We love to play with the toys and read new books each week! - *Megan and Lauren Krumenauer*

FALL CREEK

I love my local library! My husband and I do foster care and we frequent the library for reading materials for the children. We go in and get new books and it keeps them quiet in the car on the trip to town. They look forward to their new books!

We had a foster child who was damaging books. So we arranged to have a talk with the librarian, with a plan to reimburse the library for the damaged book. She was very kind and gentle, and told him there was no need to pay for the book. She said they had a jar that he could donate to so he did. He ended up feeling much better and has since been taking very good care of his borrowed books. He even left with a craft bag! - *Chari White*

The Fall Creek Public Library (FCPL) is a positive, vital part of our community! Our Director, Charlene Conradi, does a fantastic job with outreach programs that **develop and strengthen connections between the Library, the Business Community, our School System, and various Community Service Organizations.** Our community benefits from these connections immediately through current programs and services, as well as developmentally in the way in which our community is experiencing future growth! The Village of Fall Creek was awarded a \$4.25 Million dollar Flexible Facility Program Grant from the State of Wisconsin. The FCPL inspired and led the community in applying for and receiving this grant!

The future growth and quality of life in our small town is undeniably linked to the work and dedication of our Library Director and Staff. The value that Libraries contribute to our communities in Wisconsin is immeasurable! **Thank you for your continued support!**

Books are expensive, but the stories they contain are priceless. I appreciate the fact that I can borrow a book and then return it when I am done. I have just enjoyed reading a story and now it's someone else's turn.

Our family has many happy memories of enjoying our local library, especially when our kids were younger. It has definitely helped develop our now grown kids love of reading, which they still enjoy to this day! - *Michelle Kuehn*

The Fall Creek Public Library is the heart of the community. It offers more than just books - it's a place where connections are made, ideas are shared and everyone belongs. The Fall Creek Public Library brings our community together through events, workshops and programs that **foster lifelong learning.**

Libraries build community from the inside out. They get little people excited about learning. Storytelling takes us in a journey with every turn of the page. - *Amy Boettcher*

As an avid reader, I love having such passionate and caring staff at the library that can help me or my kids with book suggestions. Having a library makes our community so special and a place so many people want to call home. **Charlene and staff don't just care about the library but the greater good of all of the village and continue to make it a great place to live.**

I love that it is quiet and I love reading!

The library has always been a hidden source of all things from actual books to a meeting space for community events/groups. The library has helped me fall in love with reading at the age of 34. It helped me accomplish reading 26 books this last year. I truly believe this is because of the accessibility to using the MORE Library System - it's never been easier to access a ton of titles and place them on hold. The librarian and staff here in Fall Creek are always offering suggestions and adding new reads to the shelves. - *Staci*

Libraries are a way people can connect not only to information, but also to other people. Libraries

build knowledge, love for reading, community connection, and support. Library funding allows all of these amazing things to take place right within our own little amazing community.

The Fall Creek Public Library has been a beautiful asset to my family and I! It's within walking distance of not only our home, but all homes within our village. I find that I go there with my toddler son about weekly on average! He knows exactly where his favorite toys are and makes his way over there right away. He has enjoyed the different children's programs whenever we are able to make it to them. I love how profitable AND enjoyable our library is! I'm able to check out whatever books I need for whatever new thing I'm learning about, can print off or scan papers, meet friends for socializing and kids playing and so much more! In my unique experience it has also given me a way to serve our community (which is something that is very important to our family) by allowing me to be a trustee on the library board. It has brought me much joy to serve our community in this way and is something that fits my season of life with little kids very well. - *Marisa Kleven*

The Fall Creek Public Library is such an asset to our community! We have an exceptionally caring and dedicated staff that truly go above and beyond for all patrons. From providing engaging and literate rich children's activities to our adult history book club, there is truly something for everyone! - *Megan Jaenke, Library Board Member*

The library is the only place in town where we can hang out with friends.

Each year the third graders at Fall Creek Elementary take a field trip to the library, where they get their very own library card - a first step to developing a life-long love for reading and independence. Students also learn about the summer reading program, check out books, explore and learn about the library and its systems, create bookmarks, engage in games, and even have a friendly little competition! We are so grateful that we have this opportunity to take our students to our local library. - *Fall Creek Elementary Third Grade Teaching Team*

As a homeschooling mom, FCPL has been a wonderful resource to me. I love that FCPL can get me almost anything I request. As far as educational resources go, I use the FCPL to get

a large and eclectic number of books for our curriculum - just ask the librarians!

Fall Creek Public Library is an **integral partner with Fall Creek Schools** and in particular with Fall Creek School Library. Students are assured access to the resources they need, no matter the area of study. Materials from the public library have also supported countless teachers' curricular projects, lesson plans, and community outreach. Fall Creek Public Library has maintained a high-quality program for the school and community of Fall Creek. - *Fall Creek School District Library & Media Administrator*

Our library is an incredible resource for the Fall Creek community. It's a place where kids can discover a love for reading, whether through storytime, literacy programs, or just picking out a book that sparks their imagination. Beyond that, the library plays a huge role in keeping people connected—**offering internet access to students, job seekers, and anyone who needs it.**

It's more than just books and computers, though. The library brings people together. Through community programs, events, and workshops, it creates a space where people can learn, share ideas, and celebrate what makes our town special. Whether it's a book club discussion, a local history event, or a children's program, the library helps keep Fall Creek informed, engaged, and connected. We're lucky to have a library that makes learning and resources accessible to everyone, and I know our community is stronger because of it.

They have all the books I need!

HUDSON

I am truly grateful for our library. It serves all of our communities through its programs, collections and services. It is such a welcoming and active environment ready to serve all ages. Need a lift in these cold days? Go to the library! Our community home on the river. - *Judith Green*

The library's play area and story times engaged my 2 young daughters and encouraged their love for books. It is amazing to see their passion develop for reading!

We love the library story time! This is one of the only opportunities our community has for regularly socializing babies and toddlers.

I use the phonics books to help with intervention. We check out 25-35 books per week to read for bed. The sensory playroom, the programs, and the library of things make our library great. They also do great outreach with the schools. – Friends Group member

Our family has LOVED visiting the Hudson Area Public Library for a long time. The staff is incredibly welcoming and helpful and the events are outstanding. We have specifically enjoyed the escape rooms, bingo, and playing with the available board games this past winter break. My kids are obsessed with the reptiles and my almost-eleven year old can't wait until she can use the teenager space. My youngest can't get enough of the activity bags - even though we've borrowed the same American Girl bag at least a dozen times!

The library is a soft landing place when our family has some down time or someone says the word "bored." We often find ourselves there after dance class at the Phipps or There's always something to do including the great scavenger hunts and exploring the Friends Of room for a cheap book to keep. The library is a beloved place to our family and is an important cornerstone in the Hudson community.

The library allows me to listen to books using the Libby program. I don't have the time to sit down and read, but I am still able to enjoy books by listening to them during my daily commute using the Libby app. I love that this service is provided by my local library. I've been able to enjoy so many books that I wouldn't have had I not had access to the app/ebooks.

I visit the Hudson library once every 2 to 3 weeks. As an avid lifelong reader, I would be lost without my local library. - *Jan Strommen*

From my earliest memories, the library has been a magical place. My kids have felt the same way. It is the only place that feeds your imagination and satisfies the soul under one roof. Kids and families can relax and trust that they are safe, empowered and encouraged to delve into the world of words. – *Jodi*

Sometimes, Covid seems like the distant past, but echoes of those months (years!) of isolation

still reverberate in communities. How can we rebuild that feeling of "local" in our lives?

I've found libraries to be vital to connecting people. I've had a front row seat to the power of that "third place" in people's lives, somewhere they can meet, work, and play at no expense, while working the front desk. Personally, I've enjoyed the book clubs at the Hudson Library. I meet people I wouldn't anywhere else, and I'm encouraged to read materials I wouldn't choose otherwise. When I see those club members around town, another link of local fellowship forms.

Libraries are so important for social interaction, personal growth, and community spirit! – *Sara, library staff*

I grew up in Hudson, moved away for about a decade and am now once again a resident and raising my family. The Hudson library was an integral part of my upbringing. We did not have a lot of money, but my mom made sure we visited the library at least once a week. I attended storytime where the Librarians always made the books come alive! While other kids my age were playing with Barbies, Hot Wheels and dolls, I was playing library at home. I would take every book that I owned and set up displays throughout the house. I would then line up my stuffed animals for a storytime. Now, I have two children of my own. We are frequent library users and all avid readers! The public library is an essential part of our life. – *Annie*

Books are just the beginning. I use the library for community activities and meetings. I work there from time to time (remote employee and need to see people live now and then. I donate books. I played with my children there. I attended author readings (Fredrick Backman among them). I argued about book banning at the library (no one should be able to tell me what I can read just because they choose not to). A community isn't as strong a community if it eliminates essential services like libraries.

The library has been a pivotal part of my existence. When my son was a toddler we attended Storytime together. When I taught Pre-K and needed a particular book for a read aloud that I did not have access to at the school I got it from the Hudson library. I've participated in special events, book sales, and secured books for my teen reader. If we want to have a literate society we must provide

access to literature, programs that enrich our minds and hearts. Literacy is not for the privileged. It is for ALL people in the community. – *Alicia*

I love the toys! And seeing the river from in the library. – *Alicia and Sawyer*

The River view, the organic coffee selection, of course the book selection, the kits for check-out, the activities for the TEENS and TWEENS. Wonderful! Thankful.

I really love visiting the Hudson Library. Great Energy!! :) – *Vijayh*

It is a fun place to be in. – *Liz R.*

I love how big it is. The steps and the elevator. The smell. – *Mitch S.*

We love the children's section! Such a variety of books, toys to play with, and great story times :) – *Kaitlin, Winston + Charlie*

I love all the great books and movies I can get without having to purchase them! – *Amy*

I love books! – *Laura*

Love the location, the staff, and all the cool events that the library has! Something for everyone! – *Tracy*

We LOVE seeing the animals and we love to play! But, getting ALL the books is our most favorite thing! <3 – *Siats family*

I love all the FUN activities! <3 – *Alyssa*

I love the kind people who work here, the amazing books, the art projects, it's nice and quiet and has toys that everyone likes!!! – *Cora Jerry*

I love coming here with my friend every Tuesday! <3 – *Ziggy*

I love the view of the river and now the coffee! And all the books, magazines, and newspapers! – *Joan Dahlberg*

I love the Boxcar Children books I get at the library. – *Desmond*

It's a quiet place to read. I love the library because I get to be by myself and READ! – *Lucy C.*

Our family moved to Hudson in 1976. One of the first things I did was find the library and get a card. From the Carnegie Library (which my children remember with fond memories of story time and the secret back staircase and the fun reading nooks) to the second library (where they could ride their bikes down the

hill, meet with friends, and come home with adventures) and to the new library where I keep my books for later list, put books on hold as I hear about them, and attend amazing talks, we have and always will be a Hudson library family. It's such an amazing resource for our community and a place to draw us together. – *Cheri Thies*

MENOMONIE

When my family moved to Menomonie in 2008 from Michigan, we didn't have many connections in town, particularly for our young daughter (she'd just turned one at the time). We discovered story time at the library and quickly became regulars. We then developed bonds with the children's librarians and spent time playing with the learning toys in the library. Whenever we needed something to do or somewhere to go, it was the library. Before long, our family grew, and our younger daughter also fell in love with the library. Both of my daughters participated in the 1000 books before kindergarten program, came to the library for story time (until they "graduated" from the story time age) and special events. When we had the opportunity to donate to the library, we dedicated shelves in the children's area to each of our daughters. Through the pandemic, the library was a lifeline for us, supplying books, movies, and other materials to help fill the time at home. Summer concerts on the lawn are a family tradition--we bring dinner and picnic at the lakeshore listening to wonderful performers. We became part of the Nautilus Society for the Menomonie Public Library, with a total donation of \$1000 and counting. As time went on, I was asked to be a member of the Library's Foundation Board and have served as Nautilus representative on the board. The library is so much a part of our lives in Menomonie that we couldn't unwind it from the fabric of our family if we tried. The Menomonie Public Library, its resources, and the amazing people who keep it running are an **invaluable resource to our community**. I firmly believe that books and libraries are magic, and we are so lucky to have such a magical place in our town. – *Megan Bayrd*

Our family's love affair with the public library began years ago when my children were small, their imaginations vast, and their thirst for stories insatiable. It all started with the magic of story hour. Every week, we'd walk into the

library's warm embrace, where the children's section came alive with the sound of excited chatter and the rustling of picture books. The librarian's voice would transport us to faraway lands and fantastical adventures, weaving tales that captured my children's young hearts. The crafts and activities that followed these readings often spilled into our afternoons at home, as my kids reenacted stories with makeshift props and endless enthusiasm.

As the seasons changed, so too did our library routine. Summer brought the beloved summer reading program, a staple of our lives. My children would excitedly collect their reading logs, setting ambitious goals to earn stickers and prizes. More than the rewards, they relished the **sense of accomplishment and discovery**. The program ignited a spark in their young minds, turning them into avid readers who couldn't wait to dive into the next book.

But the library's influence didn't end with summer. Throughout the school year, it became a sanctuary where we encouraged the habit of reading. Homework assignments were tackled in quiet corners, while book suggestions from the librarians supplemented school reading lists. My children's love of books grew deeper with each visit. They began to explore genres, finding new favorites from mysteries to historical fiction. The library wasn't just a place to borrow books; it became a gateway to curiosity and lifelong learning.

The library's impact reached beyond my children, influencing my own life in profound ways. While they were captivated by fairy tales and chapter books, I explored shelves filled with information on topics I'd always wanted to learn. From history to gardening, parenting to self-improvement, the library became my personal classroom. Its resources helped me expand my knowledge base and fed my desire for personal growth. Over time, the library also became an **essential partner in my career development**. Its vast resources, online reading platforms, and endless supply of reference materials provided me with tools to grow professionally. It empowered me to adapt and thrive in an ever-changing job market.

The library became more than just a building; it was a cornerstone of our family's life. It cultivated a love of reading in my children that

shaped their education and outlook on the world. It nurtured their creativity and critical thinking. For me, it was a source of inspiration and support, guiding me through different phases of my own journey. Together, we built memories among its shelves and found stories that intertwined with our own.

Even now, as my children grow older and their paths lead them to new adventures, the library remains a touchstone. Its legacy of fostering curiosity, learning, and connection lives on in all of us. The public library isn't just a resource; it's a gift. It's the place where our family's love story with books and knowledge began and continues to flourish, one borrowed book at a time.

I went to the public library like 5 hours a week back when I was in high school. **It is an indispensable resource for people who don't have internet and a quiet study atmosphere at home.**

My friends and I are using the library's resources to help folks apply for their passports.

The library is a fantastic resource and community hub for people of all ages. I grew up going to libraries frequently my mother was a librarian and moving to Menomonie I was delighted to find a beautiful, well-stocked, elegantly curated selection of books and other media and a community center where people from children to adults are included and engaged with. Libraries are indispensable and Menomonie's library is one of the best. Thank you all! – *Anna*

I visit the Menomonie about once a week. I enjoy reading and always have a book checked out. The library staff is very friendly and helpful. Our library offers many other activities for people to gather including summer concerts outdoors, children's programs all year long, **access to computers inside the library and WIFI** that can be used in and around it so folks can use their phones and tablets in a car or use the outdoor seating. There are book sales all year long and many people donate books. It also offers book club experiences, yoga groups in the morning, jigsaw puzzles to put together, toys inside the children's section to play with, puppets and puzzles to check out, and much more. It's a central gathering place for all ages in the city of Menomonie. – *Peggy, Friends Group member*

The library helped me find community after moving to a new town. They host amazing events that are open to the public and educational. The library provided me a space to meet people who helped me settle in and make friends. The library also helped me be able to archive my personal goals for learning and development with books and content. I love the Menomonie Public Library!!

The public library is my favorite place! I can sit and read, study, meet a friend, and find amazing resources. The staff is so friendly and helpful, too! A library is so much more than books. **Libraries provide a safe place to learn and find resources** for just about anything. The library is a place for the community and all people to connect. Libraries provide programs for all ages to read, learn, and have fun. People go to the library just to see friendly faces and chat. A library is so much more than a building full of books!

You do not have to look far to see how Menomonie Public Library engages the community with its many programs and events for people of all ages and supports people's curiosity, learning and entertainment with books and other materials.

What is more difficult to see, but equally, if not more important, are the connections the library helps people create both with their learning/development and with each other. From the young dad building a house out of blocks with his child in the children's area and talking all the while to the older gentleman sitting with his daughter in a video call filling out mandatory medical paperwork to people doing puzzles (and life) together to the business professional putting in a full day's work; this library is the true hub of our community.

From books and materials to spaces and services, many people rely daily on what Menomonie Public Library provides. The gaps filled save our community and individuals money and make us a more informed and connected place to live and work. The real question people making decisions about library funding should be asking is, "What is the maximum amount of money we can give Menomonie Public Library?". The return on investment makes this the best place to put our dollars.

So much is available in our library beyond books. Frequent presentations with a large range of subjects which are available to anyone who is interested. Frequent book sales make purhasng books available to anyone at a very low cost. Children's programming is always in full swing with a variety of subjects and activities for kids of varying ages. Ongoing yoga is available to anyone and the classes are lead by a knowledgeable, experienced instructor. Ongoing informational sessions are held for a multitude of subjects for a multitude of people. **Meeting rooms are available and open for special meetings and events.** Outdoor activities are available on the library lawn including regular musical groups and physical activity programs. There's so much that our library provides beyond books! The impact on our community is huge. - *Susan Z.*

The late Jimmy Carter, when accepting his Nobel Peace Prize, urged the public to see that the greatest problem facing people of the planet is the "growing chasm between rich and poor, not only between nations but within them." Libraries are the great egalitarian public service that bridges this chasm. They freely provide internet access, books, resources, music, journals/magazines, meeting rooms for organizations, etc. Moreover, library staff become assistants in helping find information or help solve problems. I regularly read *Skeptical Inquirer* at the library. This journal tackles public policy and cultural issues with scientific acumen. It advances the laudable goal of helping citizens become critical thinkers. – *Alan Scott, community member, engaged in university/library partnerships for community activities such as celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Apollo Moon landing*

My local library (Elk Mound & Menomonie) has given me the opportunity to share my love for reading with my boys (ages 6 & 8). We visit several times a month to pick out books together. We have all discovered a variety of genres to read and fell in love with some that we weren't sure about. As a result, my boys are consistently ranked at the top of their classes for reading and comprehension. This alone is a huge win for our household. I have also had the opportunity to start reading more without having to worry about the financial burden of buying new books. The fact that we can request/place holds on books from other

libraries and use our cards at the other libraries within our consortium has challenged us to "find a new library" to visit. We all love to participate in the reading challenges and activities that our home library offers (storywalk & junior librarian for example). I have had the opportunity to participate remotely in some of the health-gearred programs (yoga). We are lucky to have such amazing, caring library staff. In fact, my boys ask regularly when they can go see Miss Monica! It makes our visits that much more enjoyable. We would be lost without our local libraries and are fortunate to have such great ones in our area! - *Sarah Golat*

I have been a volunteer at the Menomonie Library for over 10 years and I love my job! I mostly do paging, search books for circulation, and treat it as a treasure hunt. The library is also a major part of my retirement as I visit at least once a week and use the MORE system to order books and books on CD. I'd be lost without it! - *Elizabeth Spader*

I have always liked spending time in libraries, but I have found they have become much more than just a place to read books. They have become a **community meeting place** to learn about local affairs and share your opinions with your neighbors and have a cup of coffee. A library has book sales that get books into the hands of children at very affordable prices to encourage lifelong learning. The Menomonie Library exposes children to live music that they may have never experienced before. At this library you can find yoga classes, display cabinets sharing the talents of local artists and hobbyists and the art work of school children and local history. It provides a comfortable setting to do research, read magazines and surf the Internet all without charging an entry fee. Yay!

Menomonie Public Library has been a staple in our lives for 20 years. We live one mile from the library via a bike trail. Over those 20 years I would say we have walked to our library over 2,000 times. It is the perfect stroll on a nice summer day and equally as appealing in winter to enjoy the sledding between here and there. Our library is more than a house for books. It is filled with friends, events, resources, happiness. I am very thankful for my library! – *Logan, library board member*

I love going to and working at the library. **It is one of the last remaining third spaces--a**

place for any community member to go and they don't have to pay or participate in a specific way; they can just exist and enjoy the library. The library provides a safe space for houseless people to get out of the extreme weather, it is a place for families to enjoy story time and learn to read together, a place for students or working adults to work in peace. The library is also a champion for showing the many different people and community that exist in the greater community, a space to celebrate diversity and connect with others you might not get a chance to communicate with. I appreciate all the library does for the Menomonie community. – *Megan, library staff*

The library can always find the books we read for book club, whether my local branch has it or they get it through interlibrary loan! I have saved so much money, borrowing books from the library! – *Marsha Perry*

In 2024, I borrowed over 140 books from the library. Some conventional wisdom would say that saved me between 1400 and 3000 dollars (about two months' worth of rent/mortgage payments), but the truth is, I don't have that kind of money to spare. Without the library, I simply wouldn't have had legal access to those stories, those authors, that bit of education and entertainment and peace that being able to read instead of scrolling insta reels provides.

The library has always been a haven for me. Being able to read widely as a teenager and now as an adult has made life a lot richer. I can more easily put myself in other people's shoes, and being able to delve into topics and ideas I'm curious about brings a lot of meaning to my life.

I love our local library, and all the libraries like it, so very much. We need their services. – *Emily Crandall, patron since childhood*

Librarians answer the same question, many times and hour, and do it each time with joy and more joy! The library is crucial to our town and the people in it as an **informational center, a community gathering safe place** and a place to learn and read. I've never seen the parking lot more full than it has been the last few years!!!!

I have limited home internet access. It is so reassuring to know that I can stop in the

library when open and use the internet there.
– *Friend of the Library volunteer*

Library staff helped me with computer issues. I was trying to figure out a label making program and MPL came to my rescue!
– *Friends Group member*

The library is a wonderful place to take my 1.5-year-old son. He has participated in story time, special visitors like the magician, book sales, book walk, and music over Menomin. Even at such a young age, he knows the drive to the library and gets do excited to go. The library has helped us each almost 700 individual books read since he's been born. He loves the dramatic play areas and extra toys that are available. We see so many families who take their kids to the library and all of the kids have a hard time leaving but leave with a pile of books to bring home.

Personally, I have benefited from the Menomonie in Motion group that is affiliated with the Library. It is a great activity to get connected with other community members and stay active. I love the book sales, Music Over Menomin, and the **access to a printer** when I didn't have my own.

Public libraries are a cornerstone of so many communities. We are so fortunate for a great library here in Menomonie and would love the continued support from Madison. – *Casey*

Growing up in Menomonie, the public library was a place I could go to for free entertainment, education, and solitude. As a parent, I would be disappointed to see my child deprived of the same resources that I was granted 30+ years ago. – *Paul*

We love the 1000 books before kindergarten and the beanstack app for electronic tracking of books.

The Menomonie Library has really helped me feel like part of the Menomonie community. I joined a running/walking group through the library that has helped me to become more active (even when the class isn't going). And I have rediscovered a love for reading through the audiobooks I am able to access through the library. I am so excited to be starting a family in Menomonie because I know the library will be an amazing place to bring them for activities and so they can discover their own love for reading. – *Sarah*

Our family so appreciates the 1000 books before Kindergarten program! We love the enthusiasm that each of the librarians bring when congratulating the child on a successful 100 books, giving them a sticker and a book to add to our home collection. This is a great program and I'm so thankful to have had the opportunity to be part of it.

We love the ability to reserve books online and have them ready for a quick pickup!

I needed to do a research project about people with down syndrome. I was able to **do all my research at the library**. I was able to complete it and print it all at the public library. I also had the librarians there to assist me. It's a beautiful quiet place to visit. I love the library. - *Angela Raether, not a member just a resident of Menomonie*

I have found certain books I was looking for, and when I first moved to Menomonie, the librarian took me around showed me where everything was, how to access the files to find books, where to pick up books that I reserve. It is a beautiful library and always so busy. LOTS of people utilize this library. Even my Husband! :-) - *Beth Baer*

Our two boys (5 & 3) beg to go to the library every week. They love to play in the children's area with new friends and check out as many books as they can.

If our library wasn't available our lives wouldn't be filled with as many words as we have, my kids wouldn't understand the beauty in a new book and my puzzle dude would only have five puzzles to work through. Every time we drive past the library my babies asked to stop a pick out a book, how amazing is that?!

Not to mention the book bike! If the book bike is out, my kids are over the moon excited! To check out a puppet or grab a new book! We love our library! - *Anna Kellander, community member and frequenter of the children's section*

We LOVE the Wisconsin library system! As two retired teachers, my husband and I are voracious book readers. We each read approximately one book a week as well as listen to one audio book a week. If we were to purchase various ebooks, audio books, or book subscriptions, this would add up to almost \$250 per month from our budget. What a wonderful gift to the people of Wisconsin.

When I want to learn about any subject from travel, history, biography, literature, or read just for fun, the Wisconsin Library System is always the first place I go to find books and information on the topic. I love the Libby app, its ease of use and the ability to download and access books anytime, anywhere, on any subject. I love the ability to download books on my Kindle. Even when the weather in Wisconsin is unpleasant and roads are icy, I can always get a new book to read. When family and friends have moved to other states, one of the things they have lamented is the loss of the "Wonderful" Wisconsin Library System. **Our Library System is one of the greatest resources in the state of Wisconsin that enriches and educates everyone.**

The Menomonie Library is a hub for the community. The library supports the arts through the ever-popular Music Over Menomin summer concert series. They host wellness events such as walking clubs and yoga, as well as supporting a variety of community groups to use their meeting room, and grounds. For example, our local Amateur Radio Emergency Services Organization is holding a public awareness event on the Library Grounds Saturday January 25th. No other organization within the community does so much, is free for everyone, and welcomes all. We LOVE our library. - *Mary Purvis*

I have used the Menomonie Public Library since the children's library was located in the basement of the Mabel Tainter. I love books and the library has kept books in my life and help instill a love of reading to my children. Before our rural address was able to get fiber optic internet the library gave my family access to a tool to complete homework, look for and apply for jobs, and explore interests or enjoy a game. The programs for the children and teens were amazing. They got to be part of their community participating in story times, reading groups, movie days, craft days, and other project-oriented days. My boys loved being part of the Minecraft Club, another example of a positive having access to the internet. My youngest, Traven, was part of the first 1K Before Kindergarten. He loved it; he was already four when the program started; but he was motivated to complete that goal. I've enjoyed the adult summer and winter challenges, they are a little extra fun added to my reading. I mean who doesn't like earning

badges. If Menomonie or any community lost the access to public libraries a part of the communities heart would be lost. - *Cat Rogers*

I'm so grateful for our library. We can check out a huge supply of amazing books, DVDs, magazines, puzzles, games, etc. (for FREE!!!) All summer long, on Thursdays, we listen to great music on the beautiful grounds. We can use the super convenient copier, to print things off phones or computer, at a nominal price. We have the most helpful, friendly librarians I've ever encountered. **They even offer free "tech" classes for those of us technologically challenged souls...**

The book sales are a great way to get inexpensive, but meaningful gifts for friends, family, or self! Bonus, if walking on the trail, it's a great place for a water/bathroom break and to sit for a short rest to take in the lovely view of our lake. - *Melanie*

I love and use our library for many different reasons. Reading and requesting books, using Libby, printing things, music on the lawn in the summer, sponsors yoga, and couch to 5K. Very friendly staff which have made the library an asset to our community! - *Patti*

While I do buy some current books each year to share with my book club, I cannot afford to buy all the current books I want to read. I find the rest at my library. Also, I like to do Sudoku puzzles, but only the really hard ones. Commercial books are most comprised of too simple ones, so are not a good buy. I go to the library and copy on worksheets the hardest ones from two newspapers. I read the papers also. Recently, the library was a convenient in-between place for two of us to meet briefly to complete dome business. - *Lyn Collins, Friends Group member*

Firstly, the **Library is a safe space**. This is not to be taken lightly in a world that can be mean. Everyone is valued and respected. Quiet and calm is available to all. Where else does this ever even happen in our world? I always feel calmer just walking in the door. During the worst of the Covid shut-down, to pick up books at the curb became a real lifeline- the books themselves and the helping people who knew the Value and sense of the interpersonal connecting eventho' it wasn't normal in-person "contact" in a social sense.

Shelves of books is like a treasure chest every

single time - and i am NOT young!! The steadfast reliability of resources equal to everyone is unusual when you think about it: music and movies, and even magazines. Tho' it's books that bring me in, the variety of resources strikes me as so vast when i browse! I've also used the Ancestry program and have been astounded at what's available there.

I almost never buy books, and don't want to because availability is so reliable and can be ordered in the system. It's much less wasteful to borrow them, and if i want them again, i know where they are- not sitting unused at home. So it's a reuse/recycle mentality that is Earth-friendly. The library is a very, very big part of my life. – *Jan Pesek-Herriges*

When I served on the Foundation Board, the director shared that there was a high schooler from a questionable home who lived across the street who came to the library after school and on off days to have a safe place and for the companionship in addition to using the computers and other media. We had a donor reception during closed hours, and he called her and invited her to come over to have something to eat. They had “adopted” her, and I am sure made a big difference in her life. Libraries fulfill the varied needs of many people. - *Becky Hendrickson, Former Foundation Board member*

So helpful with its location, people are always nice, and all the librarians I see there are the sweetest! - *Elise Carstens*

I look forward to visiting my library and often am helped by Stephanie at the help desk. She has helped me find things I was looking for, suggested things my husband might like and has been cheerful and encouraging when I bring in class fliers from my place of work to hang in the lobby. My budget would never be able to support my avid reading habit so having the library nearby and so easy to use in person or via Libby has been a lifesaver for me.

I am so thankful for the Menomonie in Motion Program. It is so rewarding and such a fun and cool experience. - *DiAnn Rudiger, Friends Group member*

I love my library! It has been so helpful getting integrated into the community. Both summer and winter events are instructive and entertaining. The staff are very helpful and knowledgeable. - *Lynn Shaw, Friends Group member*

The Walz family (Charlotte, Noah, Jackson, Josiah, and Eliza) loves the library because:

- I love reading and I can find new books at the library and read books that would be expensive to buy. Thank you.
- We have such a helpful librarian in the world, and the library has my favorite book series.
- playing with toys, and finding good books!
- I like looking for good books and sometimes playing!
- Books!

I enjoy the community outreach programs that are offered, such as live music performances, book sales, movie nights, and yoga just to mention a few. I use the books, magazines, newspapers and movies for educational and entertainment purposes. A library is an essential part of any community! Thank you!!

Hi, books have always been there for me, I was bullied for how weird I was but stories have taught me that being weird is being a protagonist. I read a nook under the table in the library! I now write books for I have a huge imagination of my own. Hopefully the books I write you can feast your brain just like my brain did to your books.

My husband and I moved from PA to Menomonie eighteen months ago. One of our first stops after moving was our local library. The welcome we received was incredibly warm and inviting. After securing our new library cards, we were given a brief tour of the library. Within a few days, we returned. This time to borrow a Hot Spot, as our home internet had not yet been installed. **What a huge help it was to have temporary internet in our under-construction home.** During those first few months we often returned to the library for all kinds of reasons- use of the printer, pick up community events flyers, attend yoga classes, check out the book sale, and of course, borrow books. And finally, to return the borrowed Hot Spot.

We are now regular library patrons-sometimes visiting twice a week.

Eventually I joined the Friends of the Library as a volunteer; and met more incredibly resourceful community members. My husband, a professional woodworker/artist, was provided a display showcase to exhibit his woodworking items for a month. Not only did

he have a chance to display his wares, he was given an opportunity to be viewed by his own community. On several occasions, we suggested books for purchase by the library. We just finished reading those same borrowed books a few weeks ago. On other occasions, I have stopped by the library with computer technical questions.

During each and every visit, we access the community bulletin board for events and notices- a wealth of information.

A few months ago, I asked Joleen Stark if she would provide a library tour for a local retiree organization. The tour group was both amazed and excited about the numerous offerings their local library offered.

As a volunteer tutor for a local English Language Learners class, I was thrilled when the adult learners were given an opportunity to hold an open house in the library, exhibiting their self-authored book about their immigration experiences: "Voice of the Valley".

The library offers all kinds of year round community events: summer outdoor concerts, book sales, guest speakers, read with a dog, meet an author readings, book signings, weekly yoga sessions.

To summarize, our local library, Menomonie Public Library, has provided an wonderful array of opportunities and services for us. This is a brand new experience for us, as our experience with our libraries in PA was not even close to Menomonie Public Library.

We love our library, Menomonie Public Library! - *Joan Jepsen-Burger and Ed Burger, Friends Group members*

I'm a pre-med student, and I had to take the Medical Colleges Admissions Test on January 16th. I needed somewhere quiet to study over my school's winter break and the library was the perfect resource. **The quiet booth gave me a place to sit for practice tests,** looking out the windows at the lake was a great way to take a break, and the staff was always kind when I walked in with my gigantic backpack to sit from open to close. – *Olivia M.*

It is calm and relaxing and quiet. The people are nice. I like the coffee and the view and love the people.

I like the people at the library. They are helpful. the books are easy to find. I like the free bin. The view is beautiful. The library activity brochures are very helpful.

I enjoy checking out cd's and books. The free magazines and coffee are very useful. I also enjoy keeping up with the community events board. - *Emily Swenby*

I Like to go to the library to check out books and movies. I also enjoy being able to have some will donation free coffee while I am at the library. The library offers a peaceful place to watch wildlife and enjoy beautiful views of the lake in all seasons. – *Emily M.*

This library is simply one of our favorite places to be! The staff is really friendly and kind, ready to help with anything. We love to see whole families together enjoying the space and learning. Through the WI MORE system we have always been able to get the books we want to read. The book sales are also great! We decided to join the Friends of the Library to support our favorite Menomonie place. - *Jan Lynn Larson, Friends Group member*

I've always loved libraries because I love to read. But the Menomonie Public Library is a special place. The staff is immediately warm and welcoming, always willing to help if one just looks like they need something. It's easy to request books from this or other libraries, which I often do. I've enjoyed music on the library lawn and community conversations or CVLR classes at the library. I enjoy seeing all the young kids who come to choose books or take advantage of the educational games offered. At that time, it's also a chance for parents to socialize while their children are occupied. Several years ago, I decided to save myself some money and didn't renew magazine subscriptions. Now I read those same magazines at the library or check them out. Last September, I checked out a number of videos to watch while camping in The Tetons. I've felt so welcome here that I've been volunteering at this library for a number of years. It's a highlight of my week. - *Ruth Morey*

I love that my son has had a wonderful first job at the library.

It feels like an extension of me. I feel at home there. I appreciate the reading spaces near the lakeside windows. I love the different displays,

the art, the sculptures. I love the lawn area, too.

Such a treasure...and full of great people & resources. Love the music over the lake, the Appraisal event, book sale, available computers & printer for those that need them, kids area...so many things!

Everything! But the staff is absolutely the top of my list.

Thank you for all you do for our community!

The friendly staff and being able to get books when need be.

The Menomonie Public Library and its outreach locations are a true asset of the well-being of our communities! **The library serves all ages** and a place for young children and older adults alike! It's especially a helpful resource in the summer for keeping my kids reading when schools is out. And the staff are incredible!!

What an asset to our community! The staff is wonderful so helpful and greeting people as you come in and when you leave. Always so helpful. Love all the programs provided to the community, book club, music programs, in Summer and Fall, book sales, community outreach programs, children's programs! I can't imagine the town of Menomonie without this library!! Thank you!!

Love our yoga class here- everyone is so wonderful. Also was a newbie and they were so helpful with the MORE library app.

The kids treasure hunts (find-its: unicorns & birds) are our favorite. Great job!

It was the library near my parents house. It was safety and freedom and hope. Books gave me an escape from everything i was going through as did the library. It was one of the things that kept me going. now that i am an adult Libraries still give me peace.

Able Research & Read Books Before deciding to buy.

Reading Books from the library inspired my own books.

Friendly & helpful staff :)

Bugs from Bug books.

What I love about the library is the endless amount of books

I Love my library because it is one of the only places built for everyone.

YES, Love This Library! you have accepted me so much. xxooo

We love the 1,000 Books for kids program. We have an awesome library!!!! Yoga, music, goats :) always such friendly & wonderful staff & volunteers. <3 Love my LIbrary!!

comics

Love

I Love you! I love the LIbrary because I can find some ology books.

Books

a latte of books!

I love you library

Private spaces for confidential conversations. Incredibly Thankful for This!

We <3 this library. It was the 1st place we visited without kids when we moved here 10 years ago. THANK YOU!

Love the STEM, story-time & other activities

Books!

We love playing in the kids area.

All! Books!

I love, Love, LOVE Monday morning yoga with Tina!!! Thank you!!

Thank you for spreading the love of reading to my children <3

This library is the best I've seen in my 80 yrs. The architecture, the yelling children add to its human ambience. I love to read in the scene and drink coffee. The books on the shelves opened my eyes to another world. Thank you Menomonie Library!!

I love taking my daughter to story time. Ray & Jodi are so kind and fun! Thank you <3I love the variety of services that can be found @ the library. More than just reading.

Love: yoga, story time, on your own story time

The staff - friendly, helpful, knowledgeable

Music Over Menomin

Puzzles

Great Books for Kids

Helping 2 book nerds raise the next generation of books nerds.

Love: storytime, books, on your own storytime

Thank you for opening this business because if you didn't open this business then I won't be able to read <3! 2025 Your book sales! :) Cheap book + repurposing = Awesome!

I love coming to the library! It is my favorite place to be.

the library staff is always friendly **The library staff is very helpful w/ computer questions** I <3 love the kid <3 books

DVD's

It's helped me to explore places in the world I could only dream of go to!

Joleen! :)

You choose stories

The library helped me connect with other people when I was a young, lonely, new mom. <3

LOVE LIBRARY

I LOVE THE BOOKS

Storytime

I <3 Reading

I love the books!

We check out many books that supplement our homeschool curriculum.

To: The Library. I love the library because it has so many books!!!

My favorite thing about the library is that I can check out puppets, read different books, and play.

Selection of books wonderful staff <3

Reading, puppets, playing kitchen <3 *

Spread kindness around the world and come to the library to help

To help me find the appropriate books :) Suggest a book when look for a particular comfortable place to sit read or stare out at lake. :)

Thank you!

The people :) First time here- I love the view and how welcoming and clean it is here. I will definitely be back!

I love you library with my whole heart.

I am so grateful for the Menomonie library. #1- is a place of beauty- beautiful windows line the entire back wall giving an incredible view of the lake. #2 I am a single mom raising a special needs child- I have a work-from-home job- but HATE working from home. The library gives me a place of peace & beautiful to every single day! **A co-working space I can afford!**

This is my first time here. Libraries should be relaxing and comfortable, and you all get a 10 on this! I am a writer, and the view is one reason I love! Great library!

So many things you've all helped with: **Tech support on Tuesdays. Small room to study Spanish with a friend, even did a Zoom meeting in a booth**, helped me order books from other libraries or find them here. Also made copies on printer. Newspapers with words puzzles. Puzzles to do. Special programs- music (indoors & outdoors), yoga class, community conversations, book sales + puzzle exchange. Cardboard books for our grandchild, DVDs + movies + interesting books. A BIG THANK YOU.

So many reasons to love Menomonie Public Library! I love the friendly staff who acknowledge you each time you come in. I love the MORE system that brings almost any book right to this library. I love the book sales and the summer concerts & more!

The Menomonie library and its workers have helped me write and print important, and sometimes life-changing letters + documents, and are so friendly and courteous when helping. ON a lighter note, I LOVE window seats, free COFFEE!, beautiful views, great fiction and movies, the jigsaw puzzle exchange and book sales, and just **a safe, friendly place to go** where I always receive a smile and kinds word. Thank you and God bless! <3

There isn't enough room on this heart to say all the AMAZING things about the children's programs @ MPL. They gave me a sense of community as a new mom and now 9 years later I still find comfort here. We love you!

I've stopped in between appts to get work done. I've met people here, had Bible Studies in the Gesche Room. Printed + made copies when my printer was down. I've checked out many books vs. having to buy them. Used the wifi to join a Zoom meeting. My daughter has done the reading

program as a child & STEM program + 1000 books before kindergarten. I've used books for class projects when I was teaching.

The library has a great view of the lake. Little children love the puppets. Older people love the puzzles and music. Variety of newspapers! Everyone is welcome. The homeless rely on a safe haven. Historical data available. Everyone has access to books. Long term access to information. Inviting with pleasant personnel. Bulletin board with community events. Reaches out to people at the local farm market. Adult wellness classes. Runs a smooth ship. You feel happy after leaving the library.

The Menomonie Public Library has been a big part of my life since we moved here in 1972. The weekly visits since then must number in the thousands. My sons and grandson have followed in this "family tradition". The library has been one of our main sources for entertainment, enrichment, research and even cultural events. The library staff has been unfailingly helpful and personable and have become friends over the years. Thank you for having been there for my whole family!

It's a beautiful, sunny, cheerful place to sit and read when I have time to use up in town. It saves me a ton of money- borrowing books is so much smarter than buying them.

Reference librarians have helped me when I asked. I am very grateful for the library and all its employees and volunteers!! Thank you!

I love coming to the library and I love reading. Thank you! This is my favorite place to be! (Sadie York)

You guys are the best. <3 (Savannah Owionsg ?)

The library is beautiful. I do wish there was a bottled water or even coffee offered until later. I always plan poorly & end up leaving early to get something to drink.

NEW RICHMOND

There is nothing better than a book. As an avid reader and a teacher, a book can take you anywhere. We can travel the world, or we can solve a mystery. The public library is an opportunity for our community to get books in the hands of all ages for no charge. In an age where technology is everywhere, I prefer print and pages to turn. I am so grateful for our local libraries and their staff. – *Nancy Anderson*

I learned to use the computer.

My library in New Richmond, WI serves as a gathering place for my friends. It is too small, but it is a **welcoming environment to meet, chat, and connect over work projects and interests.** It provides access to books, research materials, and digital resources I need.

Our library supports lifelong learning and education for all ages by hosting free events and programs, such as storytimes, workshops, and lectures. For instance, I built and learned to care for a terrarium last fall. I learned Hmong cooking from a Hmong chef last summer! Our library enriches cultural and intellectual life of our northwest Wisconsin community.

I appreciate the quiet spaces for studying or working. It's a calm environment for people to focus. Our library is a hub for digital inclusion, I use the media resources, for instance, last summer we hosted a family w 3 teenagers for a week at our house and I used our library to check out a Roku- everyone enjoyed the great entertainment! Our public library- Carlton Friday Memorial, **offers free internet access and technology to those who may not have it at home, bridging the digital divide.** I love our library- I wish it was bigger! -Diana M.

My grandma passed away over Christmas break. When I thought about how to spend that next day, in a way that both honored her memory and celebrated her life, I knew I had to go to the library. I was able to check out a book we had talked about the week prior. I spent that day reading and remembering a woman who loved to read and was an avid library user. She didn't have a lot of money, but her local library kept her stocked up with books. The library is a tremendous resource for our community! - *Kristin Flater*

Ever since I was a little girl, my local library has brought me joy. I spent countless hours in the children section of the library in the town I grew up and remember being excited when I could start reading the "big books" found in the adult sections. Throughout college, I spent my time hidden in the back corners of the university library where I could study quiet and peacefully.

After living in New Richmond for the last 18

years, I am regularly requesting books online through the MORE app so I can just pop in and grab my newest reading materials to keep me happy at home. I have also taken advantage of the craft time hosted by Norah and have made some really neat things and had a great time! I look forward to our new building where I know I will find myself spending even more time when there is more space to huddle in a quiet corner or have a private meeting for either work or personal topics. **EVERY community needs to be blessed with a great library like ours where they feel welcomed and are always greeted by a great staff!** - Jill Fox

We moved to New Richmond from out of state about ten years ago, and really began utilizing the library shortly after, once we began having kids. And while there are a lot of things I really like about this community, for me the library is the heart of it. After comparing notes with family and friends over the years, I suspect that while some of the services offered are the same, the fantastic staff at our library sets ours apart.

They have been our ambassadors to the community in so many ways over the years. Not only just being friendly and welcoming (and often remembering the kids' names in the youth area), but also providing easy entry into State and County Parks, through borrowed passes, programs from regional nature centers and museums and community groups, as well as generally **promoting local businesses** with prizes for reading programs and such.

The youth services offerings have been thoroughly utilized by our household, from weekly storytimes to activity backpacks, to crafts, Lego and stem building challenges, to karaoke, pumpkin painting and stuffed animal sleepovers to name a few favorites. Of course there's all the great books, movies and CDs too. The librarians have always been enthusiastic helpers to my kids to search out the next book in a series they are reading or help them order a book from another library in our network. I know the librarians also make visits to the schools and 4k classrooms, as well as supply a story walk at a local park.

The summer reading program is something we look forward to add some variety into our summer activities, either through the programs or the suggested activities for each

week. The prompts have definitely given us the nudge we needed on occasion to try something new. Last year we went to a drive-in movie for the first time and now have a cherished memory and a new tradition! My child was able to take an introduction to pickleball class, and we were able to borrow the equipment from the library afterwards to take to the park to use as a family. We were able to borrow a rock tumbler to polish all the rocks we collected on our Great Lakes vacation to display.

As a busy parent, I don't have as much opportunity to read as I'd like, but there's still plenty for me as well. Thanks to one of the librarians introducing me to the Libby app, I've been able to enjoy many audiobooks. I've also been able to enjoy some cooking classes, as well as some of the no registration required crafting classes at the end of the year. Not to mention just enjoying browsing the creative end cap displays they put together (the highlight has probably been the eye spy series). Or the joke of the day on a board on the entryway. I recently learned that we can look up our ancestry there as well, which my daughter had a school project about and got really interested in. I spent several years as a stay-at-home Mom, and the library was by far the most important part of my "village", providing a place to go to where kids are welcome and an opportunity to meet other parents, make friends, learn of other youth programs in the community, or even just get a short break from entertaining my small child (the novelty of the train table or whatever, keeping them engaged for awhile).

I can't begin to calculate the value we've received from our library over the years. Not only from the costs of the materials, but primarily from the creativity and engagement of the staff offering and encouraging endless discovery of our community and beyond. We are so looking forward to the new building and what new opportunities it may present.

Thank you staff! We hope you know how greatly appreciated you are! - Kellie Burch

I LOVE coming to the Adult Enrichment Classes the library provides. I have met many people and it's fun to talk in a class setting and get to know other people, including Mrs. Allen. There have been many crafts and classes where

I have learned to do something new and have carried that outside of the library and made items at home. I hope there is always an opportunity to do these types of classes even at the new library being built. I wish my current schedule provided me more time to spend at the library. One other note - I really like the used book sales the library provides - it's fun to purchase some books to keep since I haven't had time to read lately - so I don't have to keep renewing a book because it takes me too long to read. - *Rachel LeBlanc*

The library is the best! We cannot live without the library. I love getting free books! We got kits with circuits that I loved. We tried the telescope to hunt for Orion. The people are very kind. - *Harrison Kruschke*

I like waking up to new books to read. The library lets me borrow so many books for free. I got a prize when I did a pumpkin contest and I loved it! **I checked out pickleball and I was really good!**

The library has been a life saver for me! When I became a stay at home mom, I found a great group of moms who also had little ones and the library days were our favorites. The kids loved all the songs and books, and it was great to have time to talk to other Moms. We had a good group that got together regularly. My son and I found friends in Babygarten at the library we are still close with today, eight years later.

We love all the summer and winter reading programs, the pumpkin contest, and the classes they offer. My kids have loved everything we've tried!

The people are positive, welcoming, friendly, and helpful. Honestly, we live closer to other libraries, but we can't leave the NR library because the people have been so good to us!

And the books! I homeschool and I always tell people, "All you need to homeschool is a library card." It's so quick and easy, requesting books online from so many different libraries, and even having curbside pickup as an option. The library is our favorite! We truly love the library!

The library had helped me connect to a much larger community that is helping my child grow. For many years we have utilized reading circles and challenges to inspire her to read.

That has increased her knowledge and literacy well above what school has been able to provide. We have also been able to connect with homeschool kids and others that she would not regularly see in her own school. This has been a tremendous help for her growing socially. Without the library we would not be the family we are today.

Friday library is my saving grace! I am newly retired, and I visit the library at least 3 times a week to check off titles on my to be read list. The staff are friendly, outgoing, and make wonderful recommendations. Everyone should have access to a library that is as wonderful as my local library! - *Laura Jo Jarchow*

OSCEOLA

Over the holidays, as so often happens, I realized my parents needed more help than I knew. I also realized I had no idea where to start. Thankfully I had gotten my library card shortly after moving to the community and had been using the app to read German language magazines. (What a treat!) Being away from home, I couldn't stop by the library, but using the app access, I found and borrowed several books to get me started on how to help my parents. I was able to connect with resources and read stories of people in my situation at midnight in another state! It really made me feel more comfortable and I know I can always get the paperback books later for more help too. Without the library, I'd be stuck with the unorganized, and possibly unreliable, information I could find randomly online.

The Wilberg Memorial Public Library and all of the staff working there are amazing. They are friendly, welcoming, and have a deep knowledge of the books in their library and the popular books of the time. Their investment to providing and highlighting books for everyone is so refreshing and supportive in today's climate.

Our family visits at least once per week picking up new books and our child loves the activities regularly offered for children. Our child loves the bimonthly Lego club and the new bimonthly chess club.

I work at a local museum and the Wilbert Memorial Public Library was my first official partnership to share the area's history with Osceola children. I attend story time on

occasion and have presented during one of their summer education events. They have wonderful ideas and great attendance so it's a win-win.

Last but certainly not least the library has saved me thousands of dollars in the years since I've received my library card. Please keep providing libraries their full funding and consider increasing their funding. They do so much for our communities! - *Brenna Weston*

PEPIN

I remember going to the library with my grandma at a very young age. Our limit then was 10 books. She used to read them all to me. As I got older, I discovered movies at the library. I expanded my world with 3 videos a week. As I got older. The library was my access to the internet, as our rural home isn't connected. As I got even older, I discovered history books and biographies at the library that I enjoy to this day.

I can't say enough about how much I love my local library! Being able to access books free of charge has allowed me to read so many amazing things over the years and it brings me joy to share this love with my son too. At a recent doctor's appointment he had, he said he thought the clinic was a library and a passerby was thrilled that at two years old he knew what a library was! Libraries don't get enough credit for the **breadth of services and resources available to community members** at little or no cost. They are truly safe spaces where anyone wanting to be there can be welcomed. I want to thank my local library and librarians for all they do for community members young and old - it is absolutely appreciated and noticed. - *Brittany*

My husband Joerg Kessler and I are new to the Pepin area. We moved here a few years ago when we retired. We both love to read and greatly appreciate the books in the library system as well as the books we can access online. Last year I read 146 books (that I counted!) and if it were not for the library I could not have done that.

I attend the monthly chit chat book club and have been introduced there to many books I would never have known about without the help of library staff. Both Joerg and I enjoy the cookbook club too where we get a chance to try

different types of cooking and have a pot luck with recipes from the book with other readers and the library staff.

As I mentioned we are newcomers in town. We have been introduced to new friends at the book clubs and to many different resources through the information that the staff have on what is happening in the community.

The help with both the computers and how to use them is invaluable for people who don't have computers and who lack internet. Many local people would not have access to computers without the library. The copying of documents can be done at the library / the only place in town to get that done.

The Library staff are always friendly and helpful and patient with all of us no matter how busy they are. What a welcoming place the library is. There is very much of a can-do attitude about anything we need help with in the way of ordering books or materials from other libraries in the state.

Joerg and I have taught a couple of classes at the library in our work as volunteer Wisconsin master naturalists. Again, the staff welcomed us and the 14 students we had and helped us to teach the class by letting us copy our materials at the library. We don't have meeting places in town for this type of teaching event and I don't know what we would do if the library wasn't there to help us.

We appreciate the opportunity to let the funders of the library know how much good it is doing and what an essential service provider it is. Thank you. - *Kathleen Sweeney and Joerg Kessler*

We moved from the Twin Cities to a small town and have felt most a part of the community when we found the library. We've joined an activity and have met friends. As an avid reader, in a small town, I was spending a fortune on books until I discovered I could have access to the entire world of books through the library. Cannot thank you enough!

The ability to request and obtain books is a world opener. Books I don't have the budget to buy but want to read, especially but not limited to science, politics, history, have been a blessing

in my life. I do love the library and am truly grateful.

PHILLIPS

The staff at Phillips library are always so friendly and welcome me by name when I enter. Being new to the community within the last two years, this has really helped me feel connected to the community. The library has helped me connect with other community resources and offers wonderful programs year-round. The library is great about having books on display and helping you get books that may be located at other libraries. I am so thankful for Phillips library and their wonderful staff.

Jodi turned me into a reader. She suggested books I would be interested in. I'm 64 and read more books in the last 6 months then I've read my entire life. Thank you Jodi. – Bruce

My library is absolutely wonderful. I know it's a safe place for anyone. The staff is amazing. You can go to any staff member and ask them a question and if they don't know that answer, they will go and find that answer for you. If you need help with resources or any book or item that is not currently at the Phillips library they will track it down for you. It's endless knowledge at your fingertips. In my honest opinion I think libraries are really good for the soul and the mind. It's a place of peace that won't cost you anything. If you can't get to a library in person, most libraries have an online option.

I know for a fact that anyone, elderly, middle-aged, young adult, or child can go in there and get the help they need.

Plus a bonus, I have only ever seen a librarian ushering people out when it's closing hours. Otherwise from the moment they open to the moment they close you could just sit there and lose yourself in books, magazines, comics, etc. If I'm not careful I can lose myself in the library for hours on end. I can grab a book and just go sit down and start reading. There's just something about grabbing a book, sitting down and it opening it to read. The smell of a book when you crack it open is peace to me. It means I am about to go on an adventure with the author. If you don't want a physical book they have book audio books and many others. They also have games and monthly events for

everyone. It's never boring to me. The more I go, the more I find something I wasn't expecting. Don't get me started on the books sales. I always have to save a few dollars so I can go hunting for books.

If you need help on a school project or looking something up, the staff are wonderful with helping you out. There is so much more I could mention about our Phillips library but you would be here reading it for a while. To me, Phillips library is a little piece of heaven in our world, someplace where peace is everywhere and knowledge is at your fingertips. It's one of my favorite places to be in Phillips. - *Suzanne Brunner*

The library was always a **fun and safe place** for me growing up in Phillips. Library staff is always kind and helpful

I am a newer member of the Phillips Community retiring here 2 years ago. One of the first things I did in my first days here was get a library card so I could order and take out books, since I am an avid reader. The librarians are so wonderful, helpful and welcoming. I found out there were a couple of book club opportunities, so I joined the Tuesday 12:30 group. A lovely group of women whom I'm getting to know and enjoying attending. I also want to mention the Spice of the Month that was offered last year. It was so fun learning about spices and getting new recipes. Phillips is very fortunate to have such a wonderful library, for all ages, and so many opportunities to participate. Thank you for welcoming a newbie to your library. ❤️ - *Pam Kohl*

I started volunteering at the library in 2024. I was surprised to learn all of the things our library offers beyond books. Puppets, toys and games for kids. Puzzles for teens and adults. Video games, graphic novels, audio books in various formats, internet access and printing to name just a few. Fishing poles! – *Pat Jones, volunteer*

What I love is that our library is a "window to the world" so to speak - and for those who can't travel this is even more important to our community.

And not only do we have an excellent collection of resources available right here but we are so fortunate as to be able to request any book from anywhere & have it delivered right

here to Phillips.

I for one could not live anywhere that did not support & cherish a library for their community. God bless our local beautiful space to read, learn & meet other readers - & thankfully, bless our local wonderful staff. :)

There are so many reasons I go to the Phillips Public Library in my small town in rural northern Wisconsin. It truly serves as a hub of community activities for people of all ages. There are book clubs for adults and story times for children. There are after-school activities, and a comfortable teen hangout area. There is a wonderful summer reading program for our young people. There are arts and crafts sessions offered for both young and old. There are game times that offer those in our community a chance to play together. There are even several yoga programs.

For myself, a retired educator, I have been a member of one book club that has been operating for more than 20 years. Since my retirement, I now have the time to participate in some of the other book clubs that focus on different topics. These clubs let me stay in touch with and share ideas with old friends and most importantly to forge new friendships with people of all ages. While I am old-fashioned enough to prefer to read hard copies, as a matter of keeping up with the times, many of my friends prefer digital options to use on their phones or other devices, while driving their cars or even at home.

Of course, the young people in our community, while still reading hard copies, increasingly expect to have digital materials available. It is unfortunate that the funding formula for libraries, which is based on circulation, does not count digital checkouts that are becoming increasingly common and will only become more common in the future. It is time for the library funding formula to catch up with the way people are accessing library materials in these changing times. - *Shirley Smith, Retired Teacher, Friends Group member*

I started going to the Library when I learned to read. I am 75 years young now. The Libraries and Librarians have helped me in so many ways. I have gone there to ask a question and usually find an answer. They will help me research a question or recommend a novel I

might enjoy. I can make copies of documents for a very reasonable cost. I can use their data bases for information in newspapers, magazines and journal articles. **I do not have a computer so I will go there to use that.** They will print off material for me. They order books or videos if they don't have them at the facility.

- The Library helps students studying for and exam, writing a term paper, making a resume.
- The library supports civic health, builds community trust, allows elected officials to stay informed about their constituents. What a resource center!
- The Library has craft classes and story hour for children.
- People can meet with friends in a comfortable, relaxing place.
- People use it as an office, use the wi-fi, and self employed people can meet with clients. It's quieter than a restaurant.
- It's cool in the summer and warm in the winter.
- The Library is a place to have meetings.
- The Library offers various book clubs. It's a place to learn about gardening, quilting or other hobbies and interests.
- You can buy books at the book sales and people donate their books for resale also.
- They encourage the process of learning and grasping knowledge. I don't know how I would live without books and the Library!

Libraries are evolving to meet the needs of our changing society. They are used in different ways through each successive generation. I have met friends and made friends at the Library. I love turning the pages of a book. My Grandchildren have also loved going to our Library here over the years. – *Carol Moore*

Dear Phillips Public Library Staff,

I wanted to take a moment to express my sincere appreciation for the invaluable services you provide, especially the access to the microfilm reader and the microfilm of local newspapers, The Bee and The Phillips Times. As someone who answers genealogical requests for obituaries and historical articles, the **availability of these resources has been crucial to my work.**

Since these newspapers aren't digitized or available online, having access to your library's microfilm is the only way I can conduct research for historical and family history inquiries. The closest alternative is the Wisconsin Historical Society Library, which is 225 miles away, making your services even more important and appreciated.

Your efforts in preserving and making these materials accessible truly support the work I do, and I'm deeply grateful for all the assistance you provide in addition to the book lending, photocopy access, and community room availability for Genealogy Society meetings.

Thank you again for everything you do! -
*Karen Baumgatner, Community member,
library card holder since about 1944, when
my card number was 120.*

PLUM CITY

My kids and I love the library! We are new to the area and the events they hold have helped us meet new people and get connected with the community. I've attended the book clubs, and it's such a nice way to get out of the house for a bit. My school age kids have gotten better with reading and love being able to get new books every couple weeks. - *Bridget Schlosser*

Our family absolutely loves to visit the plum city library. They offer such fun activities and programs for kids and it's such a wonderful community they have created. My children love to go to the library and check out books.

We are so fortunate in our small community to have an amazing library with programs for young, old and everyone in between! From educational programs to fun programs we all benefit. **The cooperation between the Public library and the school is phenomenon.** It is an invaluable resource for our community. - *Suzie Brunner*

The Plum City Public Library is a very highly valued and greatly appreciated community resource. Our library offers a wide variety of activities and programs for all ages. I have participated in book and cooking club, crafting events, brought a little person to summer speakers (science, magician, reptiles), play time (dress up as a fireman, nurse or construction worker, play & build with legos,

scavenger hunts, etc) along with selecting books to take home.

The reading program is another activity that encourages everyone of all ages to read. Currently, there is a reading activity for the winter. For each book read, an entry to win a prize is put into a drawing. The number of participants and the books read during this time reflects the incentive and fun of a little "contest."

One of my favorite activities is the summer passport program involving the MORE library system. In the summer of 2024, I visited 9 libraries, other than Plum City. It's interesting, informative and an enjoyable way to expand knowledge, while seeing what other libraries offer.

Computer access, printing or making copies, tax forms availability, subscriptions to local newspapers and magazines, a meeting room for interviews, story time, etc. along with everything previously mentioned, all make our library a vital part of our community and all rural communities. I encourage anyone involved in the budget process to visit their library and see how every single tax dollar is prudently and wisely spent.

The Plum City Library is very fortunate to have an exceptional director. Jenna and her staff are phenomenal in all aspects of their jobs, going above and beyond to assist everyone. - *Marie Berger*

PRESCOTT

I just wanted to take a moment to express my gratitude for the Prescott, WI local library. The programs they offer have been a real lifesaver for me and my family. It's been a great way for us to stay connected with our community and meet new people.

I especially appreciate the variety of activities available for children of all ages. My kids have had a blast participating in the different events and workshops. It's been a great way for them to learn and have fun at the same time.

And I can't forget about the librarians - they are always so friendly and helpful. **Recently, I**

needed assistance with some government forms and they were able to guide me through the process with ease.

I don't know what I would have done without their support.

So, a huge thank you to our amazing library and all the staff who work tirelessly to make it such a **welcoming and valuable resource for our community.** - *Marianne Martin*

I grew up with libraries. I loved our school libraries but also went to the town public library (an Iowa small town) with my mother, who was a voracious reader. I think we went to the library with her every week during the summer! They had a wider variety and a greater age range than our school. I still remember some of the books I was able to borrow and read from that library. My family (husband, daughter, and I) has never stopped reading a wide variety of genres.

Now, with the Prescott Library, I have the pleasure of taking our grandchildren with me, and seeing them choose books they enjoy. They also read books from their school library, but they really consider it a treat to go to the "big library." I think they've read every dinosaur book at their reading levels, a lot of animal books, and are into "chapter books" (Magic Treehouse, Dragon Masters, Dog-Man and Cat-Kid, anyone?). (Gives me insight into their interests - great to know at gift-giving time!)

We also take advantage of the extra kids' programs the library offers, open to everyone. The grandchildren love the regular Lego club, and sharing their creations with their friends there, all showing off what they've built. They have decorated bags for Halloween, built gingerbread houses for Christmas, drawn monsters and decorated turkey feathers. And they love that they get to do this with grandma. It's special generational bonding time.

I've also taken advantage of the inter-library loans and occasionally looking up specific information on the computers there. We could never afford to buy all the books we read. Being able to check out books from the library allows us to read new-to-us authors that we otherwise might never have been aware of or taken the time (and cost) to get to know. Books expose us to new ideas and broaden our knowledge of existing ones. And they're a

pleasure that I wish more people recognized and took advantage of.

Libraries are valuable - essential even.

Our presidents establish libraries of the events and policies of their terms in office, and how they got there. Robber barons of the previous century recognized their value and established libraries, made available to the common person. And, obviously, schools have libraries for the benefit of their students. Town public libraries are a benefit to the whole community.

To the powers that be: Please preserve and fund our libraries. - *Sharon*

The library has helped me save money on books and movies. Thank you, library!

I have been able to achieve my reading goals for the year [with help from my library].

[I've been able to achieve] learning more about war [with help from my library].

Every time I read, I meet a new person or travel to a new place, so libraries give me a chance to learn.

I love that they are nice (I love that [the librarians] are nice).

I really love the library!

[I love the] books and hide & seek game.

I <3 the librarians

It's a safe space that fosters a love for curiosity and exploration. I love how the library encourages and supports family literacy.

The library has been a great place in our community for my three young children!

I love all the great book choices.

I love the reading buddies in storytime.

[The library helps our community through providing] artist references, computer use, and audiobooks.

I love the craft table

Love all the Librarians!!

From the very first time I walked into the Prescott Library I felt comfortable and welcomed, and many books later, I still feel it! For a small library I'm always amazed at how quickly I get my books, how accepted my book suggestions

have been received, and how much fun it is to greet everyone each time I visit.

Debbie is the best book detective, for she has found so many vintage, obscure, or simply hard to find books for me over the years. A big Thanks! I couldn't have imagined a better library so close to home 😊 and.....I thank EACH and EVERY one of you for your, expertise, dedication. Your personalities make the library a special one 😊 - *Dianne Ginsberg*

I love LEGO club! – *Aiden*

I love the hidden pictures [in the children's section]

You are the master of ILL! You can find anything from anywhere in the nation and have it ready in no-time, which is greatly appreciated, especially when multiple copies of a book for a book club are requested.

You are such a welcoming and cheerful person to talk to about all things books and TV shows. Your recommendations are spot-on and fun. The fact that you've been with the library for decades is amazing, and hearing your stories about the library's history is so fun.

Lisa is so fun to talk to, and she is so knowledgeable of topics like D&D and Star Wars. Her library shirts are always so fun.

Laura is such a gem to talk to about books, community resources, etc. **You can really tell she cares for the people in Prescott.**

The Prescott and River Falls Public Libraries have been a constant source of joy and peace for me since about 1978. My mom knew I loved to read and she would drop me off at the library while she ran errands in town. I can still remember the smell of walking into that lovely air conditioned space on a hot summer day. I can still remember exactly where my favorite books were shelved and the feeling of both peace and calm but also excitement to find something new! **As I started school at UWRF I continued to visit the public libraries and found that the resources there were invaluable additions to the resources at the University Library.** When my children were small and the days were long and money was tight, the public libraries once again became my refuge. My children and I could spend the entire afternoon picking out books, playing games and using the computers. We could check out

movies and puppet packs and go home with new ideas and things to try.

You may think this is a small thing, but the library provided me a place to talk with other moms, learn new things and to feel like I was part of a community. Instead of feeling alone, depressed and possibly taking this out on my family, I was able to connect, refresh and my children came away with a love for books and reading.

As my children grew older, I found myself going back to school to advance my career. Once again the library came to the rescue and offered me a **quiet place to work and a reliable internet connection.** The importance of libraries to the communities they serve cannot be underestimated. Even if you do not use the library, the positive effects they have on the people who rely on them, leaves a lasting impact on the community as a whole. I LOVE my libraries!! – *Joan Simon*

I am one of the Library Media Specialists for the Prescott School District. The Prescott Public Library staff including Director Carissa Langer, Darien Becker and all of the librarians at PPL are an amazing group to work with. The Middle School and High School Libraries borrow materials from the Prescott Public Library daily. **Through our partnership with the public library, the school libraries are able to offer books, eBooks, audiobooks, and other resources to our students and staff that would not otherwise be available.** It is not uncommon for the High School Library to have 50-100 items from the public library checked out at a time.

This service allows me to preview books before I buy them, it allows teachers to create projects where multiple copies of the same book are needed and it provides materials that allow students to do in-depth research using resources that the school library might not have.

In the 18 years I have worked with the Public Library as the High School Librarian, I have never been told no to a request. Nothing is too small or too big for the Public Library to help us out with. Over the years I have collaborated with the public library on author visits and special programming. Students from the High School have visited the Prescott Public Library

at least twice this year to work with Librarian Darien Becker.

The value of the Public Library to the School District is immense, both financially and as a support system.

Many students leave our school spaces and head right over to the Public Library where the learning continues. I LOVE the Prescott Public Library! *Joan Simon in her professional capacity as a Library Media Specialist in the Prescott School District*

I've had a love story with the Prescott Library since arriving in Prescott in 1997. It has been an amazing resource for me and my family. First as a homeschooling mom and today as a senior citizen, the library has always served my needs! The friendly, helpful staff welcomed me and, especially, my three children. Summer reading programs in particular were enjoyed and encouraged my kids to read and then LOVE books. Aside from books and other reading material, movies have also been a fun way to learn and be entertained. We've taken advantage of them at our library. A quiet place to sit, write, read, go on-line, etc. I love my Prescott Library. Once a week for many years, chair yoga provided by our library is a FAVORITE program. *Keep up the good work - Julie King, rural resident*

Whenever I come to the library, they talk to me and start friendly conversation. – *Caitlyn, Teen Advisory Board member*

All of the staff are very helpful and knowledgeable regarding materials and resources. The best program they offer is gentle yoga. Erica who leads the yoga is an excellent teacher and always adds new routines. So we are never bored. The library and staff are a great asset to our community. – *Linda*

To be able to have access to so many books is absolutely incredible. I don't have the money to purchase every book and I adore reading. Especially to be able to hold it in my hands and turn the pages. – *Sarah*

I <3 how nice the staff is and the fun things I do in [Teen Advisory Board]. I also love how you take book suggestions.

I love to learn <3

I really love the library

I like the books

I like to read Dog man

Love reading books

I love reading books!

I like to read Diary of a Wimpy Kid

I really like books - *Rose Whipple*

Your books are great

[The library helps the community to] do your best and always know that you're worth it! -*Izzy*

I love the book The Babysitters Club – *Vanessa*

I love the switch games

"We should have a contest!" My best friend, Andrea, exclaimed. "I bet I can read more books than you." With some reluctance, our parents agreed to allow us to ride our bikes two miles to the town library. We thrived with our new freedom to explore together.

Andrea and I have been avid readers ever since that summer in 5th grade. We both chose a career which encourages others to love reading. Andrea is now a published author and former journalist. I became a library assistant in college, and later a Language Arts teacher and R.E.A.D therapy dog handler.

Many thoughtful and caring, smart and inspiring, librarians have mentored us since our first trip to our library. Andrea lives hundreds of miles from me now, but we connect with each other on-line to discuss our books.

Yes, we are both so glad to continue to share our life with our librarians and enjoy participating in a growing community of readers.

RICE LAKE

Life has been so busy that library time has been minimal. I just retired and my first stop of the year is at the library. I'm so excited to have library time back!

In order to form a stronger partnership between our school libraries and our public library, we have started having all of our 1st grade students visit the public library to learn about the services they can access. In addition, this is the opportunity for each of these students to set up a library card. Our goal is to have every elementary student have a library card by the

time they are in 4th grade. This will be the second year but the first year was a success. The next step is to determine if this new goal has increased visit statistics at our library and increased the circulation. - *Natalie Springer, Former Public Library Employee and Current Elementary Principal*

RLPL stands out from other services because it's open to the public and free to use.

The library helps the community by allowing anyone with a library card to check out books, movies, games and even a **“laundromat library” where people using certain laundromats can borrow books from the laundromat**, which can reach a population that might not have time to visit the library in person. So many fun group activities for little kids and adults. This brings people together, people who even in our small town, might not otherwise have a chance to interact and know each other.

I have borrowed more than 4,200 items from my library since 2009. Based on my experience with those items I made the decision to purchase my own copies of those titles. It's a win-win as far as I'm concerned. - *Hope Tierney*

I love that they have fun things to do like the market. I can't believe they have soooo many play foods and I love the art/magnet [wall] and the books. So many books and that is how a library should be. *Love, Lizzie*

Having good materials and staff and keeping the library open is great for Rice Lake Wi.

My library love story is I fell in love with the peace and quiet. ❤️

I love Libby!!!

I love the programs for families. I work but take my grandkids here often. They're preschool so it's a great introduction to books and rule following before they actually start school in the fall. My middle school grandkids love the experience kits and the AWESOME vibes that the librarians always have!!! For me, I like coloring and coffee. I've met some great new friends here !!! - *Kimberly Lane*

ROBERTS

I moved to Roberts in 2022. I bought a kindle shortly after and went to the library to get a library card to use with Libby. After my initial

visit, I was amazed at how friendly the staff was and how many books this small town library has. I kept coming back for physical books as I love the staff interaction and the community of the library. I now read mostly physical books, with some on my Kindle. I also got more involved with the library as my neighbor is the volunteer gardener. I have helped her weed and cut back plants for the winter to make sure that the library stays in pristine condition. The library has become a staple for me. I am there usually every 2 weeks and have gotten to know Tori and Laura, who are two of the nicest people. I have also interacted with several other staff who are extremely friendly as well. I look forward to returning books and finding new ones to interact with the staff and find what gems Hazel Mackin may have on the shelf! I should also note that the hold system is very good too, I get books timely, and it is very easy to pick them up and the app is very user friendly and easy to use. The library is a staple of Roberts and I am so grateful for the library and its staff! - *Alyssa Dworak*

In my adult years I have learned to love libraries. There's an online story that I've seen circulated regarding a developmentally delayed adult who got lost in their town, they ended up going to the library and the staff there helped them contact their family. When the family came to get them they asked why the individual went to the library, the individual responded “because libraries are safe”. The sibling telling this story echoed how profound that statement was that libraries were safe and I wholeheartedly agree. **I have always found libraries to be safe spaces.** It was only recently that Hazel Mackin became my home library and the first time I walked in I immediately remembered the sentiment “libraries are safe”. I thought I needed a new library card, I was so kindly greeted by the librarian who helped me figure out I didn't need a new library card and then was so sweet and excited when I checked out my first book that same day. Libraries are safe spaces and they need to be protected. - *Rachel*

The library is a **vital resource for our community.** For me, when my husband passed away, I needed to fax documents to the life insurance company. I could do that at the library. I have used the computers there in order to access my email and print important documents, since I don't have a printer. I read

every evening and I get my books from the library.

SOMERSET

I'm writing to express my deep appreciation for the Somerset Public Library and to offer encouragement for the incredible work you and your staff continue to do for our community.

Over the years, the library has become an invaluable resource in my life. I've saved thousands of dollars by borrowing books, audiobooks, and various media items that have expanded my knowledge and enriched my experiences. Each item I check out feels like an open door to new perspectives and possibilities.

Through the library's offerings, I've also been able to participate in two book clubs – a rewarding experience that has strengthened my connections with friends and introduced me to new acquaintances online. These interactions have not only expanded my literary horizons but have also positively impacted my mental health by fostering a sense of community and engagement.

I want to commend the library for its unwavering **commitment to providing resources that promote learning, connection, and well-being**. Your dedication is felt by so many, and I hope you take pride in the transformative role the library plays in people's lives.

Thank you for all that you do. I look forward to continuing to explore and benefit from the library's services in the years to come. - Ashley Cochran, Friends Group member

We are impressed with our library and what they have to offer. **My husband uses the meeting spaces for different meetings and my daughter likes the different classes and activities**. I always like checking out the selection and the ease of getting books from different locations. The librarians are always kind and helpful. - *Angie Garn*

The Somerset Library has been a favorite place in the community since we moved here eight years ago. As newlyweds to a new town, the library was my go to for fueling my love of

reading, especially on warm days by the river. The staff continues to know my interests and make amazing suggestions. The audiobooks available are my sole source of entertainment and mental get away on my daily commute.

With the growth of our family, Mr. Daniel helped us make connections through story time, my daughter reached 1,000 books before kindergarten, we have done new crafts, learned new skills, and been entertained many times. My children are always excited to see what the staff has changed with games, coloring sheets, puppets, food stands, and more. We find backpacks that lead us on outdoor adventures or expand our knowledge. The sensory room engages us on cold winter days, rainy summer days, or just when we need a new space.

From starting in a community not knowing anyone, it has brought me such joy to go to the library and see my children engage with the friends they have made and know we will always have a welcoming space. - *Karlie Lehmann*

I love and appreciate our public library/libraries! Our primary home library is Somerset and it is a lovely and peaceful place to browse books, magazines, newspapers and DVDs. Being able to order materials online through the MORE system is such a wonderful resource that I utilize very often, and appreciate the service greatly. Thank you to the wonderful staff for making it a welcoming place, and for all that you do!

I love being able to order books from MORE Library. I love purchasing books from the donated book section. **I love being able to access the computers and print documents** there also. The librarians in Somerset are so patient and helpful.

The local Somerset library is the heartbeat of our community. The books, the events, and the staff who are guardians of knowledge and history are a credit to Somerset. Thank you for all you do! - *Phyllis Askey*

10/10 Somerset is the standard for all libraries to emulate! Great crew, and welcoming environment. Couldn't be happier to take my child there as much as I do!!!

I grew up in Somerset and recently moved back. The library provided a **crucial service during the first few weeks when I didn't**

have WiFi for my new remote job, and I continue to rely on it when I need printing done. But much more than that - the library helped me reconnect to my community and settle back into life in Somerset. Now I go to the library as often as I can! The librarians welcome me by name and are always kind and helpful. The educational programs are interesting and well attended, and I have many friends who take advantage of the programming for young children. The library is a cornerstone of our village and I support giving it all the resources it needs to continue serving our community.

The library has provided incredible enrichment opportunities free of charge to us, including scavenger hunts, books to enrich early childhood preschool curriculum, and my son's personal favorite, Frankentoy making! Daniel especially has been an incredible resource in supporting child development and engaging children in experiences they will cherish for years to come. As a family who financially doesn't have the resources needed to engage in paid early childhood enrichment, I am beyond grateful that my children still can have opportunity for developmentally appropriate and enriching experiences. – *Friends Group member*

Since 2021, my new year's resolution has been to read 52 books a year. I have been able to not only meet but exceed that resolution in 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024. Every single book that I have read in each of those years has been checked out from the library!! I have not bought a single book. Our library system gives us some of the best access to books and I certainly would not have been able to meet my goals without it. - *McKell Larson*

Our Library has a History Room, and it has been a popular place. With new people moving into our Village there has been a demand for information about our past. Many people have come in to seek information about their relatives or just to find out about the settlers in general. Questions like who came (Names), why did they choose to come here, and how did they get here. (By water, wagon trail, horseback, or on foot).

To be able get out of the house for a change of pace and let my kids play is huge for a mom. We love the changes in the kids play area that keeps it exciting, storytime to interact with other kids and have some fun whole learning,

and the various activists the library puts on/provides. – *Brittany J.*

All the books I read and the audio books I listen to come from the library. The MORE system allows me to find and checkout the books I need for my book club. No matter which library owns them, the books are delivered to my home library---Somerset Public Library. I would be lost without the services of the Somerset Public Library!!! – *S. Sroka*

Libraries are nothing short of amazing. Ours especially!

In a world where everything not only costs something, but nowadays costs what feels like an arm and a leg, the library is a welcome breath of fresh air in that it's free! And not only free, but one of the greatest gifts is offered here - knowledge! So much information in so many different types of formats....For free! Can you say this about any other place?!

Additionally, being that we are a one income family, I want to still be able to offer our children quality resources and programs and our public library gives us just that! **What better way could we invest than in children and our community?** By investing in our children, we are giving them the gift of knowledge and helping open future doors for them!

We are so thankful for all of our librarians - it is one of our favorite places to go where we always feel comfortable and welcomed. (Even if we've had to return a book that was harboring a piece of cheese thanks to a two year old or a small sample of artwork by a three year old!) Meg, Renee, Daniel and Brianna are always so kind and helpful! We love our library! – *Ally*

SPRING VALLEY

When my husband needed to go to memory care, I needed the quiet space to fill out the dozens of pages of forms as well as a copier to include other information. This took days of work that I could never have accomplished at home. The library ensured that I had space set aside was not disturbed. They also checked in with me on a regular basis.

We had been patrons for years to check out books, often eight per week. The librarian

would order books she thought we would like through the interlibrary system. This library is an amazing gift to the community. - *Rebecca Holz*

They have helped me by giving **access to computers and printers** when filing insurance stuff. They also help keep my kids busy and excited to read by hosting events throughout the summer. The book club rekindled my love for reading and let me find my individuality apart from just being a mom.

After my husband passed away, I lost all desire to read, and I was an avid reader. Katie Schneider started a reading challenge, and that was the spark. I needed to get me back into reading. That only is there a reading challenge, but there's a monthly Bookclub that is so fun and she picks books that our current relevant old classics and genres that I would never have read on my own. The Spring Valley library is a gem in our small town. Not only is Katie great but all the people working there are the same. - Ann Siegel

I know a hearing impaired lady and asked her to join the library and then the library received a CD player and she loves being in the library and being able to listen and I love it too because I have her borrow mine before. Is it just an all-around good library everybody there is so nice and so helpful

The Spring Valley library is an important space for many in our town. In the library I can always find a book when i need an escape. I've been able to check out a **blood pressure cuff** as well as pickleball equipment.

I use the space to teach an English class, to pick up books I've ordered on the MORE system, to browse movies to watch with my kids. And **I see people using the computers/wifi for homework, for work and for fun.** I see kids coming in to do scavenger hunts that Katie has put together, people doing crafts, young people discussing books! The library is a safe and comfortable space for many different people in Spring Valley.

Our librarian, Katie Schneider is incredibly creative and hardworking. She is like a personal librarian to everyone, helping find books, extending a hold, inviting readers to join book clubs and other groups.

She is creative but financial support would make this space open more hours. Our public libraries are one of the best things in the United States. Please see a way to support them. - *Joyce Borgerding*

I used to read in high school, and then when I graduated, I stopped. I had my first child and then the only books I read were to him. Fast forward to January 2023, I see everyone's post from 2022 on what they read for the year. A friend of mine told me to just get down to the library and Kate would help with everything. So, in walks me the next day, and all I said was help! Haha! Kate is the best, she set me up with everything, recommended my first book, and I read it in 7 hours. 2023 was my year! I read 53 books! 2024 could have been better, but I still read! Kate is an amazing library director and I'm proud to call her one of my friends! - *Kylie*

When I first moved here I was worried about my kids and I not having friends or activities to do. Coming to the library for kids summer events started a friendship that I now know I could never live without! Little Gracie is like a bonus niece and you're like a sister to me. I'm always here for a glass of wine, a yard sale, or just to sit and do nothing! You've been so amazing and do so much for our community through everything you do!! I love you. - *volunteer*

My libraries are the heart of the community! They provide research, puzzles, DVDs and problem solving. Sharing the love of reading is an important way to end social isolation and contribute to healthy brains.

I so appreciate our little home town library. My 96-year-old mother has found a new love for reading. She has macular degeneration, so she needs large print. Katie finds her new books all the time, calls her to let her know when they are available, and she goes down to get them. Makes it so easy for her! Passes the time for her and she enjoys reading. - *Amy Cady*

We are truly blessed with our local library. The library itself is clean, organized and welcoming. One would be able to check out anything from books to ice skates! **Their involvement in the community is amazing.** They involve all ages and enjoyable-mostly free- activities. Many of these activities require a sign up that fills in fast due to the popularity of the event. Not only do they have enjoyable activities- they involve local businesses to host many of their events- such

as book club, painting parties and trivia.

The library provides the community a great service not only as a library but as part of the glue in our little village. It is obvious the amount of time and effort Kate, the Library Director, puts into the involvement of the community. Her high energy and bubbly personality just makes one feel welcomed no matter what the age! – *Friends Group member*

ST. CROIX FALLS

I absolutely love the St. Croix Falls library. I decided to ditch my Kindle and start checking out books. It is not only a money saver, but I get to interact with the kind staff. I also love going to the library to read the local and daily paper in the sunshine by the big windows. The SCF library has some **good workspaces, computers, and printers** that I have used over the years. I love seeing the children enjoy the space and participate in the many activities the library sponsors. I participate in The Big Read and check out books frequently. I was thrilled to hear that my adult children just renewed their library cards after my pitch for the value in checking out materials vs. having to buy them. Libraries are an essential part of any community providing a safe and warm atmosphere, endless resources, and technology for those in need. - *Sheri Norgard*

So many reasons to love the Library. Free books, magazines, DVDs, computer use. Special event space. **But most of all the community engagement they promote and collaboration for city wide support on so many levels!** Love Su! - *Lisa Jensen*

All the librarians are always so friendly, helpful and know me by name. As soon as you walk in there is always a warm hello, good morning, etc. as a child it was always a go to place for me, to discover my love for history. - *Brittany Bess*

Such a needed asset to our town. Gathering spaces for meetings, computer accessibility for those who need it, many live presentations for education and lastly, a quiet place to select books and media to make us all a bit smarter! We all need that nowadays!!!

I moved to St. Croix Falls in the middle of the pandemic. The library's MORE system was my lifeline to great reading during those strange times. Once the library opened up again, I was

astonished by how beautiful the building is....and how busy! I love going there for meetings in the meeting room and seeing the little ones playing in the children's area. Our library staff are always friendly and are very interested in finding ways to make the library better. I've attended a few classes there as well as a fun winter movie series. I've also used the community room for song circles and my friends really like the drum circles. The fact that the farmer's market happens in the courtyard makes for a wonderful Saturday morning -- chatting with neighbors, buying fresh food from local purveyors, picking up books.... I love our library! - *Barbara McAfee*

Alex is always **knowledgeable and helpful** in finding books, answering questions, and resolving any issues that might happen. We know we will receive excellent service when Alex is there to help us.

The librarian and staff at the St. Croix Falls Public Library provide excellent service to those of us who use this library. They answer questions, help us find relevant books and materials, and I don't know what I would do without them. They did everything they could during the COVID pandemic to make it possible for us to keep checking books out during that difficult time when the public was not allowed to enter the library. I am so grateful for all of them, and I want to commend them for the wonderful services they provide to their patrons. - *Barb Anderson*

I've had a love affair with libraries for a very long time. I spent a great deal of time in my hometown of Duluth, MN at the Duluth Public Library while I was growing up. I've had a library card in every state and neighborhood I've lived - quite a few libraries over the years. From MSP to TX and several points in between.

My current town of St. Croix Falls, WI has a wonderful library! I've found just about everything I've needed there from new books to classics, research materials, and movies. I've also utilized the computers and printers, and I've attended presentations and taught classes in the meeting rooms. Every community, large or small, needs a library. It's not just an oasis of information, it's the center of the community, and a place for kids and adults to gather, learn, and grow into intelligent and well-rounded individuals.

When I was a kid the library was an amazing place where I could learn, discover, imagine, and travel through time and space; infinite possibilities! It is my hope that those endless possibilities remain within these sacred institutions of ours, and that every author and every subject is included on those shelves. It's our history and our future. We all have a responsibility and a need to educate ourselves and our children. Public libraries are an integral part of that necessary, lifelong learning. That is what makes a better world. Thank you. - *Marissa Dodge*

STANLEY

D.R. MOON MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Our librarian, Elizabeth Miniatt, came to our library at a historic time, COVID. She handled that with leadership and perseverance. Our services at the library were able to continue because of her. In 2022, the library board made a five-year plan. In that plan, the library had a goal of expanding and renovating our 124-year-old library by 2026. Because of her leadership, this is becoming a reality. Our library is the heart of our community. We are ready to provide this service for the next 124 years. - *Cathy Ryba, Library Board President*

WOODVILLE

For the 10 years that we've lived in Woodville, "Miss Karen" has been a solid support person for our family. She's always happy to help us find specific material, give homeschooling support and authoring advice, and is an overall wonderful woman in the community. She sets a warm atmosphere in the library and is excellent with kids. - *Liz*

As a homeschool family, the library is invaluable! I couldn't homeschool our children to the best of my ability without the resources and programs that the library offers! Thank You!