Overview of the Library Staff:

- The Library consists of 14 staff members equal to a 10.23 full-time equivalent. The library has six staff members that work full time and 6 part-time employees that work a variety of hours ranging from 20-32 hours per week. We also have 2 casual employees that work between 10-16 hours per week. The library is organized into technical services and public services. Randy Decker, the Public Services Librarian, is the supervisor of the public aspects of the library. This includes circulation, computer access, and programming. Kari Gadient, the Technical Services Librarian, is the supervisor of the technical services department for the library. The technical services department is responsible for collection development, ordering, receiving, cataloging and processing of materials.

Red Wing Public Library’s Top Accomplishments in 2020:

- Providing Library Access During the Covid-19 Pandemic

The essential role of public libraries became more vital than ever as our nation grappled with the devastating impact of COVID-19. Our library had to adapt to the current environment in new and innovative ways, helping people gain vital access to information and necessary services. It was a time when information and resources were constantly evolving. The Library closed on Monday, March 16, 2020 to the public. Staff continued to work inside the building and did a thorough cleaning of the building. When Governor Walz issued the stay at home order some staff worked from home and other staff members used sick leave. We continued to staff the phones and respond to emails. We were actively working at this time to develop plans to offer services to the community.

One of the first things that we did was extend our Wi-Fi to increase access from the exterior of the building. It was already available from outside the building 24/7, but we were able to increase the range. On March 24, 2020 we began offering programing online. This included story times, Lego challenges, One Book Minnesota and a variety of other programming directed at children and adults. On April 27, 2020 while the library building was still closed to the public, we began offering no-contact curbside appointments to our patrons. Our curbside has continued to evolve and went from requiring appointments in the beginning to now allowing patrons to come at a time of their choosing throughout the day Monday through Saturday. This has been a resource that the community truly appreciates and has led us to think about offering this as a service even after the library is completely re-opened to the public.

On May 26, 2020 Randy Decker presented our phased reopening plan to the City Council. This gave us a plan and had specific benchmarks in place for each phase of reopening. On June 15, 2020 we reopened the library for browsing, computer appointments, and copier appointments. This allowed people in the community to again have access to our computers. Something that is often hard to
replicate when the building is closed to the general public. This service is very important for many individuals in the community because so many services have gone to strictly online enrollment.

Unfortunately, on November 20, 2020 due to the increase in Covid-19 numbers the library scaled back and stopped browsing appointments. We continued to offer access to the public computers because this is a service that we cannot replicate or fulfill in another way. We returned to allowing patrons access to the building for browsing appointments on January 14, 2021. This followed the plan and coincided with the reduced Covid-19 numbers in Goodhue County and the return of students to in-person instruction.

Our circulation for 2021 was 115,898 physical items and 17,646 e-items. This number does not include use of e-resources besides the Overdrive e-materials. We worked to develop new ways for the community to know what was on offer at the library. Without the ability to browse our materials we had to come up with alternative ways to browse and we did this by incorporating new “What’s New” lists for a variety of genres, we put out fliers and bookmarks with book recommendations and used special activities to further promote our materials.

- **Going “Fine Free” and Returning Access to the Community**

At the City Council meeting on Monday, November 9, 2020, the City Council voted to pay $95,246.13 for lost items. The City Council requested that the Library Board consider the waiving of fines and fees. The Library Board in a Special Meeting voted to waive $31,572.40 in fines/fees from Red Wing community library accounts. Doing this freed up access to library accounts with fines/fees that were blocked from using the library. Through the waiving of fines, fees and the payment of the lost items from the City Council we were able to return access to all members of the community.

In addition to the waiving of library fines/fees the Library Board of Trustees voted to move the library to being “Fine Free” beginning on January 1, 2021. What does going “Fine Free” mean? It means that we will no longer charge fines on Red Wing Public Library materials that are overdue, but fines may be charged on items that they take out from other libraries in the SELCO system. We will still be charging for damaged or lost items.

We felt that it would be imperative to get as much of the lost materials returned prior to requesting payment from the Finance Department. We worked over a two-week period to get materials returned and stressed that it was extremely important to return our materials and that all fines/fees would be removed from their accounts. We were able to get a lot of materials returned and it resulted in the amount dropping from $95,246.13 to $57,496.62. We have completed the waiving of all fines/fees and the payment of all lost items for Red Wing Public Library materials. The amount paid for Red Wing materials was $51,511.62. We are currently working through a process with SELCO and the other SELCO libraries to get checks out to the lending libraries. The amount being sent out to SELCO and the other lending libraries is $5,984.

The funds we received will be used to offer services and resources that our community needs. We have already introduced six chrome books with hotspots for circulation and on January 18, 2021 we added Brainfuse to our e-resources. BrainFuse HelpNow and provides free online homework help, writing lab assistance, test prep, video lessons, and study tools, including free online access to a live tutor during certain afterschool and early evening hours. They offer help in Spanish for all subjects offered in English. We have also subscribed to their JobNow product, which includes live interactive online help combined with online resources to help users with a job search, including interview help & resume/cover letter writing. All of this is free and available to anybody with a Red Wing Public Library card, as well as free to use by anybody who is inside our building, with or without a card.
The American Library Association’s position on library fines “asserts that imposition of monetary library fines creates a barrier to the provision of library and information services” (2018-2019 ALA CD#38(Rev.1/27), passed by Council at the 2019 ALA Midwinter Meetings). The association urges libraries to scrutinize their practices of imposing fines on library patrons and actively move towards eliminating them and urges governing bodies of libraries to strengthen funding support for libraries so they are not dependent on monetary fines as a necessary source of revenue. Research indicates library fines restrict access to materials and services while evidence shows ending library fines results in an increase in patron usage of library resources.

Fines and fees can be barriers preventing people, especially poorer people, from using library services. Our library needs to be a place people turn to not just for books but also for community events, job-search assistance and help in finding information and accessing services. Finding ways to reduce those barriers is important. Our library plays a meaningful role in our community and by eliminating library fines we become more welcoming to the community. We are happy that we can make using the library a less stressful, more accessible experience for the entire community. We are very excited to start 2021 off with open access for everyone in the Red Wing community.

- Summer Reading 2020

Summer Reading 2020 definitely had a different look than it has in the past, but we still managed to serve up a summer of fun! Thanks to the generosity of book publishers, Cyd Mark and Megan Seeland were able to continue with their Wednesday and Thursday live stream story times, which were streamed on the library’s Facebook page. Families and day care providers alike expressed a great appreciation for the ability to still enjoy library story times with us each week. We also continued with our weekly Lego Club build challenges for children going in to 1st grade and up, with challenges issued on Mondays and that week’s build submissions collected and housed in our digital display case, located on the Lego Club page of the library website.

The biggest piece of the puzzle this year was moving the summer reading log program to a virtual platform, while still making sure that it was familiar and mirrored the reading families are familiar with and enjoy. We invested in the Beanstack software and app program, and set up children’s, teen, and adult summer reading challenges. All readers met timed reading goals, earning and collecting virtual badges and a series of prizes as they read their way through the program. Children read for thirty hours over sixty days, while teens and adults had an opportunity to read for up to three hundred hours. All ages earned library book totes at five hours read. Children earned treat coupons and a free book along the way, along with raffle tickets for sixteen different baskets of books, games, and other activities going to children who completed all thirty hours of the program. Teens and adults earned five raffle tickets for every five hours read, to be entered into drawings for gift cards to local businesses.

We also created a Get Outside! Reading Challenge for all ages, where readers completed at least eight of twelve outdoor reading activities to be entered into a drawing for Minnesota field guides and gift cards to the Red Wing Bicycle Company. This challenge was available through Beanstack and as a downloadable PDF. In addition to library-specific activities, we also partnered with Ready, Set, Red Wing!, a group of community organizations who came together to contribute to a summer activity book. The library had a couple of pages in the activity book, and we also served as a pick up and drop off location for the books.

150 children registered for the children’s summer reading program, with 32 completing all 30 hours of reading. A total of 102,869 minutes were logged by children this summer. 37 teens registered for the teen summer reading program, with one completing all 300 hours of reading. 24 teens completed
at least 5 hours of reading this summer, and 68,205 minutes were logged by teens. 94 adults registered for the adult summer reading program, with one completing all 300 hours of reading. 60 adults read at least 5 hours this summer, and 239,498 minutes of reading were logged by adults. 193 people registered for the Get Outside! Challenge, with 24 completing the challenge.

Cyd Mark, Megan Seeland and I all feel that, all things considered, it was a very successful summer. We were able to connect with families online, and heard a great deal of positive feedback from families and adults about Beanstack. Everyone enjoyed using the platform a great deal, and were so happy to still be able to participate in summer reading. We plan to continue to use it through the school year, and, depending on what next summer brings, will hopefully be able to run a hybrid summer log program next year. It was a summer of learning and improvisation for all, but I feel it was a good one!

- **Series Records**

We began working on a huge project in April of 2020. Library staff have been working very hard on a series relabeling project. This would allow us to put the books in series order on the shelves. We are having to relabel the book and to meticulously update the record links in the database. This will assist all libraries in the SELCO region because we have a shared catalog. The romance collection at the library had previously been cataloged this way. We completed the relabeling and record updates for the mystery collection, the science fiction collection and the young adult collection.

We are currently working to relabel and update the records for the juvenile chapter books. We believe this will make the children very happy because we would often find them on the shelves in series order prior to this undertaking. Once we complete the juvenile materials our final step will be to complete the general fiction collection. We believe this will assist people as they search for books to read. Series order is a question that we answer quite frequently and we hope that our community will appreciate the work we have done to assist them.

- **Training for the Library Staff**

Library staff training and development is a crucial element in ensuring positive user experiences within libraries. A staff component consistently exposed to relevant training and development interventions should not be underestimated. The Library Long Range Plan called for offering opportunities for professional development and I believe that we did this by offering a variety of training opportunities to our staff.

Libraries face a host of new challenges, among them finding ways to stay relevant in the Information Age. The skills library professionals need continues to evolve. If a professional environment is changing, so then will the skills and competencies necessary to perform successfully in that profession. The criteria for successful performance in the information profession are constantly being raised as a result of innovations in technology, communications, and learning. We are also facing many social and economic changes. Taking all of this into consideration we encouraged staff to grow through training. Overall, the staff completed 100 hours of training on a variety of topics including cultural intelligence, diversity, emergency preparedness, implicit bias, racial equity, Spanish, technology and violence prevention.