



## City Council Report

Red Wing Public Library

Prepared by: Jessica McGee, Library Director

January 2023

### 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 six part-time employees that work a variety of hours ranging from 20-32 hours per week. We also have two casual employees that work between 10-16 hours per week. The library has three departments, including, technical services, public services, and youth 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 Gadiant, 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. Megan Seeland, the Youth Services Librarian, is the supervisor for the youth services department. This department is responsible for all youth programming and collection development.

### Red Wing Public Library's Top Accomplishments in 2022:

- **Marketing the Library and Returning to Normal After the Pandemic:**  
Throughout the pandemic we continued to offer programming and library materials, but in a modified way. Our library had to adapt to the pandemic environment in new and innovative ways, helping people gain vital access to information and necessary services. We were able to bring back many of the services and some small group programming inside the library in 2021. We followed the Covid-19 numbers closely and provided services for children outside as weather permitted. The Youth Services team provided story time in Central Park into November of 2021 since the weather permitted. The Youth Services team also extended the number of weeks that they placed a Story Walk in Bay Point Park. In addition to this the Youth Services Department also had monthly Take and Make crafts, a Harry Potter Book Night Kit, and several reading contests throughout the year. We continued many of these adjustments through 2022. Children's programming returned to being inside the physical library in September of 2022.

We had worked for several years prior to the pandemic to make the library a destination rather than an errand. We wanted people to come in and enjoy the library space. Additional comfortable seating was added to the library and we developed a children's area that allows families to visit the library and explore. The children's area provides seating for adults and activities for the children.

We increased our online presence and added an Instagram account to our social media options. We have also increased the number of booklists and recommendations available. We began offering this during the pandemic to assist people in finding materials when they were unable to enter the physical library. This new tool has become essential to our community.

While we have not returned to our pre-Covid numbers, we are seeing a steady rise in the number of people coming into the library. We expect that we will continue to see an increase in the numbers. These numbers do not reflect the people attending programming or meetings in the downstairs of the library or the number of people that attended the programs held in Central Park. These numbers only reflect the number of people entering the library proper. We are also continuing to offer a curbside service to people who are unable to come into the library to pick up their materials.

| Year | Door Count |
|------|------------|
| 2019 | 142247     |
| 2020 | 53200      |
| 2021 | 67803      |
| 2022 | 104598     |

- **Increase in Adult Programming & Diversity of Programming**

The community had requested an increase in the variety of programming offered to adults and the diversity of program offerings. We worked to develop additional program offerings for adults. We have developed a partnership with the Goodhue County Master Gardeners. They are now offering quarterly programs dealing with various aspects of gardening. They will also be assisting with the refurbishment of the garden outside the library where the Sunflower statue will be placed this spring. We have also implemented a monthly trivia night which has continued to see participation grow.

I am currently working with Stephanie Olson, the Community Engagement liaison for the Mayo Clinic Health System. We are working on developing a partnership that will see quarterly programs relating to health. We hope to have our first program in the first quarter of 2023. I am also speaking with Mary Jo Katras, the program leader, for the University of Minnesota Extension programs about beginning quarterly programs dealing with finance to the community. We are also working with Maggie Cichosz, Community Engagement Specialist for Goodhue County Health and Human Services to provide additional programming for the library community and possible training for library staff.

We worked to increase the diversity in our programming and presenters. We invited Melvin Carter Jr. to speak in May of 2022. Mr. Carter discussed his autobiography entitled *Diesel Heart*. After serving in the U.S. Navy, Carter pursued a life of music before becoming one of the first people of color on the St. Paul Police force. He served as an officer in the St. Paul Police Department for twenty-eight years before retiring. He is the founder and executive director of Save Our Sons, a social service nonprofit that focuses on youth outreach within Juvenile Detention Centers. Carter's autobiography tells the stories that shaped his life and how African-Americans changed America.

We also had a Community Read that featured the book *The Seed Keeper* by author Diane Wilson. Diane offered an author talk in the morning and moderated a book discussion in the afternoon on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Diane Wilson is an Mdewakanton descendent, enrolled on the Rosebud Reservation. She was the executive director for the Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance, a national coalition of tribes and organizations working to create sovereign food systems for Native people. Her book, *The Seed Keeper*, follows a Dakota family's struggle to preserve their way of life, and their sacrifices to protect what matters most. We had a large group attend her author presentation and the book discussion. We were very excited to see a large variety of age groups represented at the presentation.

In November of 2022, we had Teresa Peterson, *Utuhu Cistinna Win*, who is a Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota and a citizen of the Upper Sioux Community came and discussed the book she co-wrote with her Uncle. *Voices from Pejuhutazizi: Dakota Stories and Storytellers* is an examination of the stories told by Teresa Peterson's family. Five generations at Pejuhutazizi (the place where they dig the yellow medicine), Teresa Peterson's family members have listened to and told stories: stories of events, migrations, and relationships in Dakota

history, and stories that carry Dakota culture through tales, legends, and myths. The program was very education and provided a lot of personal insight from the author.

- **Summer Reading 2022**

We had a marvelous, active summer here at the Red Wing Public Library, full of fabulous programs and presentations, story times, story walks, and writer's camps.

We planned a summer full of dynamic, engaging programming that would give children of all ages a wide variety of opportunities to experience the wonderful diversity of cultures that makes up our Minnesota community. Children were able to listen to stories from the African oral storytelling tradition from master storyteller Nothando Zulu from the Twin Cities; learn about the history of the Mille Lacs band of Ojibwe, their incredible tradition of beadwork and bandolier bags, and create their own shoulder bag to take home; listen to the fabulous Latin American music of salsa band Salsa del Soul (and dance in a big, impromptu conga line!); and interact with the music of woodwind quintet Chione, who performed a musical story adapted from Minnesota author Ka Vang's story *Shoua and the Northern Lights Dragon*, about a Hmong family who goes camping in the Boundary Waters. The Chione musicians also taught a few signs in American Sign Language to go with the story and about each instrument in the quintet.

We also enjoyed the return of long-time favorite programmers the Reptile and Amphibian Discovery Zoo from Owatonna and The Magic of Isaiah, a very fun comedy magic show all about the magic of reading. A very special thank you to SELCO and Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, without whose generosity we would not have been able to host the Chione quintet or Salsa del Soul! SELCO and Legacy funds also brought Minnesota award-winning middle grade author Anne Ursu to our library in early June, where we enjoyed a reading and a lively Q&A where Anne shared a great deal about her writing life and process with an enthusiastic audience.

Families and day care groups had their choice of indoor or outdoor story times in the park this summer. We enjoyed some gorgeous summer mornings in Central Park on Wednesdays, and came inside on Thursday mornings for story time in the Foot Room. Many families enjoyed both story times each week! Each story time featured three to four books, along with a variety of songs and rhymes paired with each week's book theme.

With summer comes the return of our popular Story Walks in the Park. Featured in Bay Point Park all day on Wednesdays (rain checks on Thursdays), story walks are the pages of a story printed on large yard signs and placed along the walking path by the Mississippi. Each story has 18-24 individual story boards, and the boards are paced out from 15-20 feet, depending on the length of the story. Families, day care groups, walkers, and cyclists can head to the park any time during the day to enjoy a walk and a new story. We had four new titles printed this summer to add to the collection we began building the summer of 2020.

Young writers had an opportunity to attend either a middle grade (grades 5-7) or high school (grades 8-12) writer's camp at the library this summer. The middle grade camp met for eight sessions in June over two weeks, and the high school camp met in July for nine sessions over three weeks. Each group worked on developing an original story idea into a short story or novel beginning, and it was wonderful to see each writer's creativity, ideas, writing ability, and relationships with the other writers in their group grow over the length of each camp.

Readers of all ages had an opportunity to log their reading minutes this summer in our virtual reading Beanstack app to earn virtual badges, prizes, and tickets into drawings for raffle baskets and

gift cards to local businesses. Long admired, we made the switch from paper to a virtual app in 2020, and readers are loving it. With the virtual badges, readers, especially children, receive more frequent reinforcement and motivation to keep reading so they can collect the full set, as well as the prizes that can be claimed at the library. Readers can read on their own time and at their own pace, and can log their minutes anywhere and anytime. The app also gives readers the ability to choose which prizes they would like to earn, or put tickets toward winning, which is a very positive change from the paper version of summer reading. We had the highest participation and completion numbers in this third year of summer reading with Beanstack, and many, many excited readers in the library each day excited to claim their next reading prize. Beanstack logging concluded on Monday, August 8<sup>th</sup>, and all our big summer winners have been contacted – and many rushed to the library right away to claim their winnings.

Although the big programs of June and July came to a close, we still offered a number of programs for the month of August. Our popular Story Walks continue in Bay Point Park on Wednesdays through October. We had a collaborative story time with the Red Wing Park Naturalists in Colvill Park, which will include read-aloud stories, followed by a park naturalist-led nature craft and nature walk. We are also offering an American Girl and Kid Lit Superstar Bingo challenges for kids ages 5 – 13 through mid-September. And, finally, we hosted our first Dungeons and Dragons and Magic: The Gathering game night for kids ages 10 and up. Designed to be a learn-how-to-play game night, we were able to partner with local downtown game shop Rivertown Games for what was a super fun evening.

After a very long couple of years, it was wonderful to see children, families, and readers of all ages back in the library this summer looking for books, reading, playing, writing, and enjoying library programming. We look forward to our fall season of story times, game nights, Lego Clubs, writer's group meet-ups, craft nights, and other fun activities!

### **Red Wing Public Library's Focus for 2022:**

We are going to be continuing to work on increasing the library's presence in the Community. We will be contacting Greg Taylor, Q Media Group, to develop ideas on making the community more aware of what the library has on offer. We will also be implementing ideas from our discussion with the Advisory Planning Committee on the best ways to market our programs and services. They suggested several places to advertise that would get the best exposure throughout Red Wing. We will also be working to make the library a more welcoming environment and to reduce barriers. We are working through several ideas to increase the comfort level of people entering the library.

We also increased the amount of outreach that we did within the past year. We were visible at a variety of festivals, school sponsored events, and worked with a variety of community organizations. We hope to continue this trend by further getting library staff and Library Board members out into the public discussing with groups and individuals what the library has to offer the community. We offer so much more than books, but often people only think of this one area when they think of the library. We are especially interested in making the community aware of the available online resources. Each student in our community has access to the internet through their chrome books. The library offers an online tutoring program with a live tutor to assist students from 2 to 11 PM throughout the week. The tutors are available in both English and Spanish. They also have online test prep and a writing lab that will review work prior to it being turned in.

We currently have a Spanish language collection at the library, but have plans to increase the holdings in both print and e-materials. We are working to develop more marketing resources for our

online services in the Spanish language. We will also be working to develop signage that incorporates the English and Spanish languages. We will also be working to market our programs and services in English and Spanish. We have already modified how we complete our posts on social media. All information on the graphic is also written out in the description. This will allow for the description of the post to be translated into any language offered by the social media's translation software. We have added some marketing of services in the Spanish language and added signage in the library building in the Spanish language, but expect to increase this throughout the year.

Library Staff will continue to complete training to provide them with the skills and knowledge to provide services and resources that are equitable for all community members. Jessica McGee will continue to work with Michelle Leise and other departments to develop community resources that are available to all members of the public. We would also like to increase the cooperation with the local school district to make them aware of services that the library offers that would benefit their students.