Changing for TOMORROW

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

GREAT RIVER REGIONAL LIBRARY
Explore...learn...connect...

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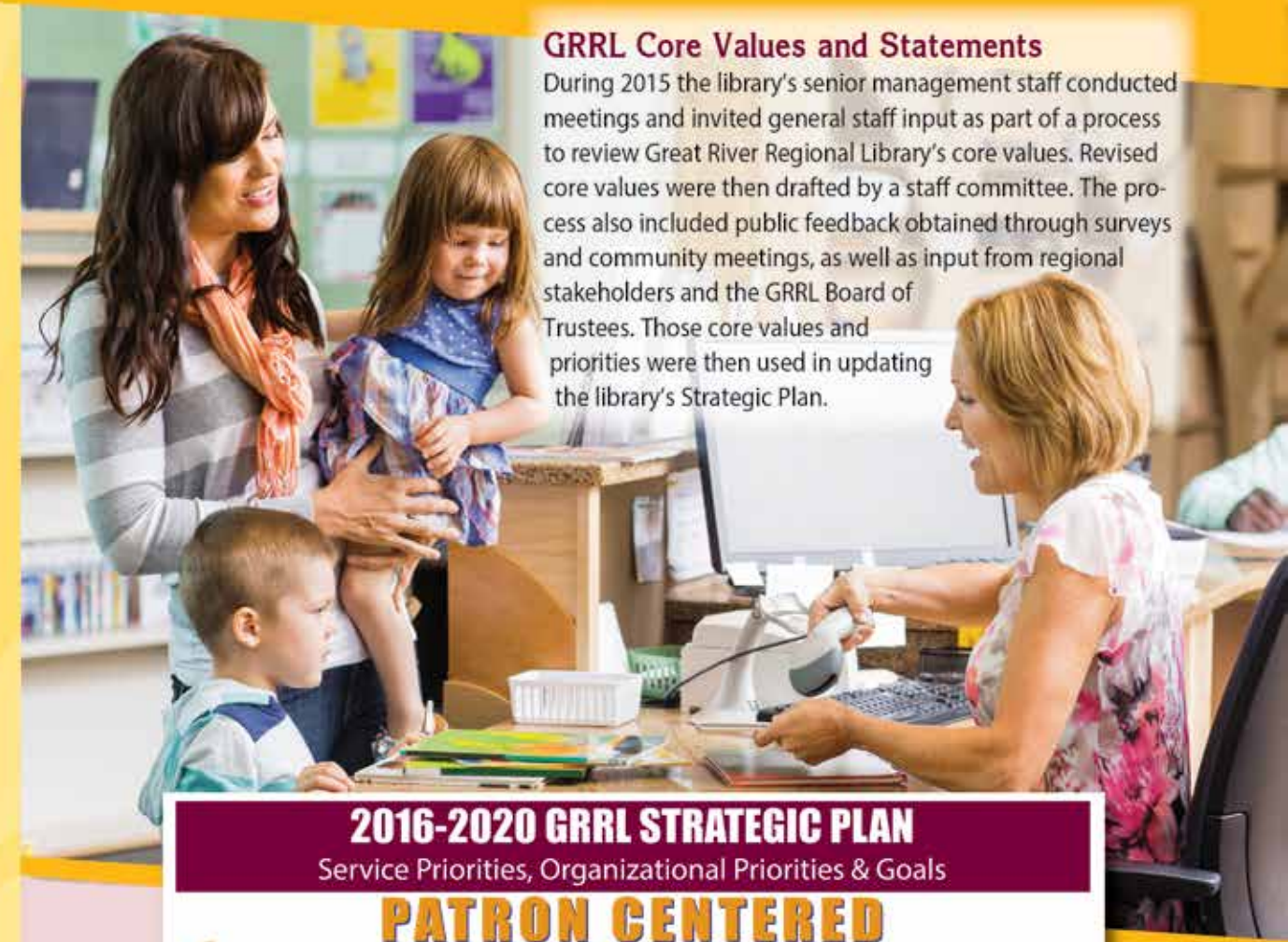


GRRL Core Values and Statements

During 2015 the library's senior management staff conducted meetings and invited general staff input as part of a process to review Great River Regional Library's core values. Revised core values were then drafted by a staff committee. The process also included public feedback obtained through surveys and community meetings, as well as input from regional stakeholders and the GRRL Board of Trustees. Those core values and priorities were then used in updating the library's Strategic Plan.

2016-2020 GRRL STRATEGIC PLAN

Service Priorities, Organizational Priorities & Goals

PATRON CENTERED

GREAT RIVER REGIONAL LIBRARY

CORE VALUES

MISSION & VISION

Mission:
Explore, Learn, Connect

Vision:
The Neighborhood Gateway: Inspiring Central Minnesota to shape the future through exploration, knowledge and connection.

EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE

- *Empowered, knowledgeable staff.*
- *Honesty, integrity.*
- *Respect for all, appreciate our opportunity to serve.*
- *Free and equal access to information.*

FORWARD THINKING

- *Challenge ourselves.*
- *Innovation and new ideas.*
- *Build on past success.*
- *Responsive to a changing world.*
- *Anticipate future service needs.*

COMMUNITY FOCUS

- *Trust, team.*
- *Communicate.*
- *Create partnerships, promote our libraries and services.*
- *Inclusive and embrace diversity.*

Executive DIRECTOR

Karen Pundsack
Executive Director

Changing for tomorrow

In 2015 Great River Regional Library experienced a year of transition. It has been a year of laying the groundwork for our library system's future. We entered the year conducting a nationwide search for a new director. We ended the year with clear Core Values, a new vision and a strategic plan for the next five years.

Our dedicated staff stepped up to the demands of navigating change, and remained engaged in serving their communities. Libraries around the region hosted community meetings to gather feedback from our residents about what they want to see from their local library. Residents provided advice on how the library could improve its services to communities. A subcommittee of staff was brought together to identify and solidify our core values. Their work produced a simple but challenging set of values the library can use going forward: to be a Patron Centered organization through Exceptional Service, Forward Thinking and Community Focus.

We spent time in 2015 reconnecting with the cities and counties we serve in order to spread the word about how libraries are adjusting to meet changes in our communities. We are preparing to meet the needs of both our aging workforce and our digital natives. Libraries will be integral parts of the maker movement, the sharing economy and even a world looking to unplug.

No matter where in the six-county area you live, Great River Regional Library is your Neighborhood Gateway. Our vision is to inspire Central Minnesota to shape the future through exploration, knowledge and connection. We are on course to build from our previous success and strengths. We began this journey in 2015. Thank you for taking it with us!

Karen Pundsack
Executive Director

"We ended the year with clear Core Values, a new vision and a strategic plan for the next five years."

SURVEY Information

SCSU Business Student Partnership

Herberger Business School students from St. Cloud State University assisted the library by completing real-world assignments to fulfil requirements for a final Strategic Management class. Groups from two classes assisted the library. The first group began their class in 2014, working on an awareness campaign and creating a public service video which they then distributed to local cable networks across the region in January, 2015. Cable networks typically reserve time for public service announcements, and the students identified the networks and ensured the video met their technical requirements. The video can also be viewed via social media on YouTube.

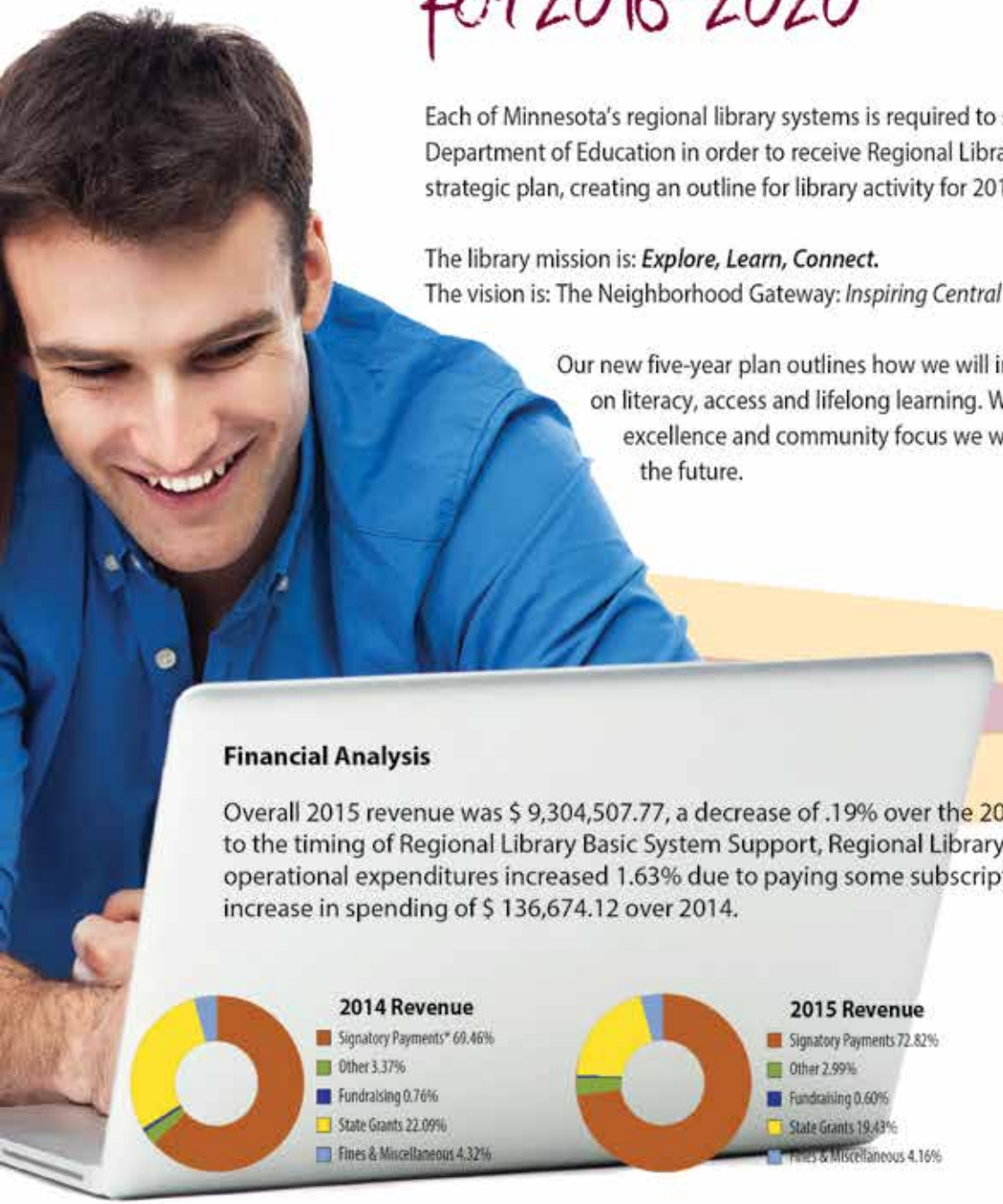
The second group created a user/non-user survey about library usage and administered the survey to university students. The university has a large, modern academic library on campus, so Great River staff were not surprised that a small percentage of busy students use the public library. Staff were surprised by the percentage of students who said they did not know the location of the St. Cloud Public Library. The survey was used again throughout the region. Results were used as part of the GRRL Strategic Plan process and will be used during planning for library marketing and communications.

Surveying Patrons and Non-users

Determining the information needs of area residents is essential to effective library planning. In 2015, a public survey of users and non-users of library services asked individuals about their level of satisfaction, and gave non-users the opportunity to share why they don't use the library. The results of this survey, as with other similar surveys in the past 20 years, indicate a strong and satisfying relationship between the library and its users.

Overall, 92 percent of library users rated their satisfaction from good to excellent; 85 percent said they visit the library 11 or more times a year. They visit to check out reading materials, audiobooks, music CDs, and videos, and to use meeting rooms, attend programs, use computers, or for other reasons.

STRATEGIC PLAN for 2016-2020



Each of Minnesota's regional library systems is required to submit a five-year strategic plan to the State Library Services office of the Department of Education in order to receive Regional Library Basic System Support funding. In 2015, staff reviewed and updated the GRRL strategic plan, creating an outline for library activity for 2016-2020.

The library mission is: ***Explore, Learn, Connect.***
The vision is: The Neighborhood Gateway: *Inspiring Central Minnesota to shape the future through exploration, knowledge and connection.*

Our new five-year plan outlines how we will improve and enhance the lives of our residents and users. Our services will focus on literacy, access and lifelong learning. We will leverage our internal strengths. Through exceptional service, operational excellence and community focus we will deliver outstanding public library services over the next five years and into the future.

Financial Analysis

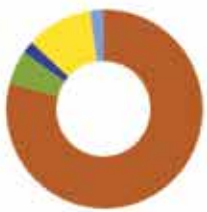
Overall 2015 revenue was $ 9,304,507.77, a decrease of .19% over the 2014 figure of $ 9,322,623.85. The decrease in revenue is mainly due to the timing of Regional Library Basic System Support, Regional Library Telecommunications Act, and Legacy funding being received. Total operational expenditures increased 1.63% due to paying some subscriptions ahead of time knowing we had a surplus in the budget. This was an increase in spending of $ 136,674.12 over 2014.

2014 Revenue

- Signatory Payments* 69.46%
- Other 3.37%
- Fundraising 0.76%
- State Grants 22.09%
- Fines & Miscellaneous 4.32%

2015 Revenue

- Signatory Payments 72.82%
- Other 2.99%
- Fundraising 0.60%
- State Grants 19.43%
- Fines & Miscellaneous 4.16%



2014 Operating Expenditures

- Personnel 79.16%
- Services & Contracts 5.67%
- Other 1.95%
- Library Materials 10.66%
- Automation 2.56%

2015 Operating Expenditures

- Personnel 78.79%
- Services & Contracts 6.01%
- Other 1.71%
- Library Materials 10.99%
- Automation 2.51%

*Signatory Payments from Benton, Morrison, Sherburne, Stearns, Todd and Wright Counties

eMAGAZINES ADDED to digital library

eMagazines are the latest addition to the GRRL Digital Library, joining eBooks and eAudiobooks.

The initial offering was 41 different magazine titles. They include familiar names such as "House Beautiful," "National Geographic," "Seventeen" and "Smithsonian." Other magazines may be added later.

Cardholders' access to all 41 titles is essentially unlimited. eMagazines, eBooks and eAudiobooks are provided under licensing agreements that restrict how many downloads are permitted for each title. The agreements for popular eBooks and eAudiobooks provide for only one patron to access each copy at a time. The agreement for magazines provides for simultaneous use; many users have access to the same copy at one time.

Magazines download in their entirety and can be read at leisure. Unlike eBooks and eAudiobooks, they are not programmed to self-erase once the loan period ends. Like eBooks and eAudiobooks, they do not need to be returned.

We Play Here Grant

Children now have more opportunities for playful learning at the library, thanks to a grant received by GRRL from the Minnesota Department of Education/State Library Services.

The "Playful Learning in Libraries" grant addresses the need for "welcoming and engaging spaces and experiences for children ages 0-8 years old and their caregivers in public libraries." When children play, they are relaxed and receptive to learning experiences. Libraries began encouraging playful activity over silent activity in libraries more than 30 years ago.

With grant funds, the library purchased 20 We Play Here kits, materials to enhance the early learning environment in each library, and materials to enhance Baby Bounce and Toddler Time storytelling kits used within the library.

We Play Here kits

The kits are rotated among GRRL's 32 locations for use in the library. Each kit contains educational toys, instructions for parents, and printable handouts.

Materials to enhance the early learning environment

Libraries have received kid-friendly signage and other items that encourage parents to engage their children in conversation.

Materials to enhance Baby Bounce and Toddler Time Storytelling Kits

Adding a sensory play component to the existing Baby Bounce and Toddler Storytelling Kits increases the engagement, learning, and motor skills of children.

Women's Writing Workshop at Sherburne County Correctional Facility

Sixteen incarcerated women created chapbooks (printed booklets) that are now part of the GRRL collection housed at the Elk River Public Library.

Women at the Sherburne County Correction Facility wrote stories in two creative writing workshop series. Artist/writer Tish Jones, playwright and poet Marcie Rendon, and writer Diego Vazquez Jr., author of "Growing Through The Ugly," provided instruction in the workshops.

The women wrote and edited pieces for publication and received copies of the edited stories in chapbooks. The chapbooks can be requested for checkout at any GRRL library.

The workshops and publication were made possible through a collaboration including the Advisory Task Force on the Woman and Juvenile Female Offender, Bookmobile (a book printer), the Central Minnesota Arts Board, Great River Regional Library, and the Loft Literary Center. It was supported in part by Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

Library Card Registration in Schools

Prior to 2015 the only way children could get a library card was by visiting the library. Not any more.

In 2015 the library took first steps in a program that resulted in children registering for library cards in school classrooms. Students in Elk River, St. Cloud, Sauk Rapids/Rice, Sartell and Zimmerman received library cards in the program's first wave.

The change took place in response to a request from the school media specialist at Sauk Rapids/Rice Middle School. Every student has a computer tablet in the school's 1:1 technology model. The school media specialist wanted to ensure each student also has online access to GRRL's reference databases and research materials. That meant getting a library card.

Library staff developed new procedures and the library Board of Trustees approved a change in policy to make it possible. GRRL completed the pilot registration with Sauk Rapids/Rice where staff delivered 599 new cards for distribution at the school. School-based registrations then took place in Belgrade, St. Cloud, Elk River and other locations.

The opportunity for school registration, with data entered either online by students or at the library by staff, is being gradually rolled out across the region. As more schools replace textbooks with digital technology, collaboration between families, schools and libraries will be increasingly beneficial.

SERVICE Totals

Weeding Process Under Analysis

Every public library system has to ask itself: what am I going to do with all the old books?

Today's bestsellers are always in high demand. But who even remembers which book was top of the list ten years ago? The library still needs copies of "The Da Vinci Code," "Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince" and other old favorites, but not in the same quantities as it once did. For example, there used to be long waiting lists for "The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo," but today, roughly three-quarters of available copies are sitting on the shelf.

The process of eliminating unneeded materials is called "weeding." In 2015, leadership called on recently retired banking executive Brian Myres to assist in simplifying and streamlining the weeding process. Myers is known as an innovative thinker and has a consulting firm specializing in facilitating change. He brought an outsider's view to help participants think about the process from a patron-centered perspective. Two projects grew from that conversation. The first was to develop condition guidelines and training so that all staff will be empowered to make weeding decisions based on condition. The second was to cull duplicates of materials on the St. Cloud shelves without date stamps. Date stamps were added more than ten years ago, so the older, duplicate materials are good candidates for removal, making room for new items on the shelves!

1,412,164 Patron Visits

235,248 Information Transactions

82,048 Wireless Connections

3,275,115 Items Checked Out

2,693 Meeting Room Uses

193,303 Digital Checkouts

Major NEWS

Libraries store the energy that fuels the imagination. They open up windows to the world and inspire us to explore and achieve, and contribute to improving our quality of life.

–Sidney Sheldon

Board Amends GRRL Joint Powers Agreement

Great River Regional Library provides services across six counties under the authority of a Joint Powers Agreement originally approved in 1969 and amended several times since then. The agreement provides for stability and transparency, and encourages the Board of Trustees to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars. In 2015, the board formed a finance committee consisting of the six GRRL board commissioners and one GRRL board citizen representative. This committee, together with library staff, will prepare future budgets for approval by the full board.

The group also changed an article of the Joint Powers Agreement which stated that failure to pass a budget prior to August 1 would trigger an automatic 3% inflationary adjustment for the following year. The Joint Powers Agreement language now states that "Failure to pass a budget...shall mean that the budget will be the same for the next year."

St. Cloud Times Reports on Library Genealogy Services

ancestry

ST. CLOUD Times *Your Place To Be.*

The library's online and person-to-person services for genealogy were featured in a lengthy story in the St. Cloud Times in November. Library Associate Wendy Sykes conducted a series of well-attended genealogy programs in which people learned how to get the best results possible when researching with the Ancestry for Libraries website. This powerful website is available to library users with a library card inside the library.

Paynesville's Dementia Support Program Reported by WSJ

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Paynesville is one of 36 Minnesota communities implementing dementia-friendly measures in response to increased awareness of the impact of Alzheimer's disease. The Wall Street Journal reported on the city-wide effort to assist people showing the effects of dementia in a story published in October. The story includes photographs of a display of books on dementia and Alzheimer's disease at the Paynesville Public Library, as well as a training session taking place there.

SERVICE Totals

79,690
Patrons Attended 3,195 Programs

539,504
Checkout Sessions

183,380
Computer Uses

950,384
Items in Collection

114,005
Library Cardholders

Google can bring you back 100,000 answers, a librarian can bring you back the right one.

-Neil Gaiman

Great River STAFF

Employees are the public face of the library

The staff from all 32 locations come together each year for a day of training and an opportunity to share stories. Because the region is large, branch locations are distant from one another. But training day, inservices, shadow day, team membership and other opportunities are provided for staff to meet and build a collective sense of purpose. It's normal for administrative staff to seek the input of all staff on issues of procedural and even philosophical questions. But beyond the administrative meeting rooms, where employees and the public conduct business, our public service staff are responsible for ensuring that patrons receive the assistance they need.

Our Great Staff Members

Dennis Ackerson
Rebecca Aleckson
Beverly Anderson
Jane Anderson
Katherine Anderson
Margaret Aschenbrenner
Carla Asfeld
Sara Asfeld
Janet Atkinson
Heather Atwood
Rose Bailey
Deeanne Barthel
Cyrene Bastien
Janet Bergeson
Elizabeth Bloch
Anne Blom
Eric Blotkamp
Nancy Boeckers
Meghan Rae Boltz
Nicole Boone
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Megan Bratt
Jodi Brinkman
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DeeAnn Brost
Katy Brothen
Cindy Bruggenthies
Edith Buermann
Nancy Bunting
Jennifer Burgess
Jeannette Burkhardt
Grace Butkowski
Michele ButterfieldJuip
Michelle Cagle
Shannon Cameron
Brandi Canter
Leslie Carter
Barbara Cartwright
Laura Cassiday
LuAnne Chandler
Daniel Cheney
Schelsie Chilstrom.
Rendi Ann Christensen,
Jennifer Cleveland
Anne Clune

Jan Connolly
Karen Converse
Mary Cornelius
Deborah CoxJohnson
Terri Czech
Lillian Davis
Hilary Dawson
Raul De La Garza
Trisha Decker
Jennifer Dickinson
Ruth Dolven
Julie Ann Dorn
Judy Doty
Kayla Downer
Kristi Dryden
Margaret Ebert
Zoe Eckblad
Tamber Edin
Karen Eherenman
Jean Ellingson
Wanda Erickson
Joy Fiore
Emily Fischer
Meredith Fjeldheim
Joseph Floeder
Tera Dione Fogal
Deanna Folkerds
Michele Forsman
Janean Fradella
Jennifer Frank
Elizabeth Frerich
Shirley Friedrichs
Barbara Frieler
Susan Fruth
Judith Ganz
Janice Gerth
Christopher Getz
Kara Lenn Gibford-Markman
Joseph Godfrey
Alexandra Goebel
Donna Michelle Goebel
Amy Gosswiller
Christina Gottwalt
Anna Granlund
Jeffrey Grimm
Sharon Gross

Kelly Marie Groth
Irene Gruber
Kateri Gruber
Deborah Haggar
Sarah Hakes
Rebecca Halderson
Kylynn Halican
Monica Halloran
John Hannon
Patricia Hansen
Kathie Harris
Amy Haubenstricker
Mary Katherine Headlee
Lila Heins
Katie Helm
Bryna Hendrickson
Julie Henne
Gregg Hermerding
David Herstad
Grace Heschke
Sunny Hesse
Diane Hesselroth
Lisa Hill
Stephanie Hill
Johnathon Hirdler
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Theresa Hollermann
Mathion HopeTraphagan
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Lois Hultberg
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Debra Kopperud
Tamra Kowalski
Jennifer Kreger
Heidi Sue Kroll
Maxim Kroll
Shelly Kuelbs
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Caron Lage
Connie Laing
Elizabeth Lambert
Barbara Lantis
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Nancy Leasman
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Steven Lex
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Chris Mallo
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Jill Mertes
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Konda Miller
Twila Minter
Beverly MooreDunn
Amanda Motschke
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Julia Tagney
Mary Tanghe
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Gretchen Thompson
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Pamela Wagman
Michelle Wagner
Carolyn Wahrman
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Tresa Wangsness
Taunja Warga
Susan Watts
Susan Weaver
Karen Weeres
Amanda Wehrspann
Judy Weis
Cathleen Weldon
Victoria Welle
Sandra Welton
Mary Wherry
Sharon Wichman
Amy Wiener
Molly Wills
Nancy Wind
Tracy Wing
Amy Wittmann
Judy Wolak
Lorie Wuolu
Karen Zeug

Leadership TEAM

Patron Services
Brandi Canter
Patron Services Supervisor

Public Relations
Julie Henne
Associate Director

Patron Services
Ryan McCormick
Patron Services Supervisor

Finance
Aron Murphy
Accounting Coordinator

Information Technology
Jay Roos
Associate Director

Human Resources
Julie Schmitz
Associate Director

Patron Services
Rachel Thomas
Patron Services Supervisor

Collection Development
Jami Trenam
Associate Director

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Ruth Clark
Teresa Clifton
Catherine Coleman
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Michael Fa
Family of Bernice Rengel
Craige and Gloria Farwick
Fieldstone Elementary School

Thank you!

Great River Regional Library (GRRL) seeks to build public and private partnerships that provide innovative learning opportunities for our 470,000+ citizens.

As expenses for core services continue to grow, donor support is more significant than ever. Donations allow GRRL to provide various services and an extensive collection free of charge to Central Minnesota. Private donor support has made possible the purchase of thousands of new books and other materials, computers for individuals with visual and hearing impairments, and prize incentives for the Summer Reading Program serving over 11,000 children and teens.

The Great River Regional Library wishes to extend sincere appreciation to the individuals, corporations, foundations and organizations listed here for their generous support throughout 2015. These donors have enriched lives and helped build stronger communities in Central Minnesota.

Thank You!

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Kara Fink
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Friends of the Library, Paynesville
Friends of the Library, St. Cloud
Friends of the Library, St. Michael
Friends of the Library, Sauk Centre
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Waite Park Friends of the Library
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