



CURRENTS

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Howard Lake Opens New Library

The new Howard Lake Public Library is open! The new, net-zero library opened in its new location on August 12 at 817 8th Avenue. This monumental shift from its previous location at 617 6th Avenue was a true community effort. The Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted football team, among many other volunteers, played a crucial role in the move. The planning and construction involved local interests as well as regional and statewide ones, including the City of Howard Lake, Great River Regional Library, the state of Minnesota, USDA Rural Development, and the Howard Lake Friends of the Library. This collaborative effort is a testament to the community's strength and unity.

Through efforts by library staff, library users will benefit from a refreshed collection of books and other materials. About 1,200 new books were sent to Howard Lake to be showcased on their new bookshelves.



These latest additions have sparked excitement among library users eager to explore the brand-new collection. Visit the new building during library open hours found at griver.org/locations/howard-lake.



Appreciation Lunch & Bingo to Celebrate our Donors!



GRRL hosted an event to thank our Connector, Scholar, and Visionary-level donors. An appreciation lunch and bingo were held on Wednesday, May 15, at the St. Cloud Public Library from noon to 1:00 p.m. Attendees enjoyed Panera catering for lunch and then had fun playing bingo hosted by the Fund Development Committee and Board of Trustee members Zurya Anjum and

Lisa Fobbe. Bingo winners received books to take home!

Discover the various giving levels available at griver.org/giving-club and learn how to join us at next year's appreciation event to celebrate your support and connect with like-minded individuals dedicated to making a difference in our community.

My Library Story by Zurya Anjum

Friends forever!

Books have always been a source of countless hours of learning, entertainment, and enjoyment for me. In my home country, where I grew up, access to public libraries was limited. Borrowing books from siblings and friends and books gifted to me were my main sources of reading materials. We voraciously read any new book we could access and then discussed it among ourselves. Some of my favorite memories are from sharing book memories with my friends and siblings. Buying my favorite books and rereading them again and again gives me unmeasurable joy to this day. I even remember passages from my favorite books!



Going back in time, it is March 1999, before smartphones, before we all had access to computers every day. I arrive in the U.S. as an immigrant in search of opportunities. Within a short time, I go from someone employed and independent with a car to a person who cannot drive or work in a new country. Everything around me has changed so quickly, and I am desperate to find a friend in this unfamiliar world. As soon as I settle in, I look around my apartment for a public library and am delighted to find one within walking distance. Walking into the library and finding new and familiar books is like finding a friend. I check out as many books as I can carry with me, divide them into two bags, and walk back to my apartment, feeling the weight of the books on my shoulders but feeling so light-hearted in spirit. Hello, my old friends! I have found you again.

Now, 25 years have passed. I am working, doing what I love to do with a supportive and loving family. I have passed on my love of books to my kids, who nowadays go on the Internet to find books instantaneously! Today is a time of instant gratification, and everything is just one click away. I cannot explain to them the excitement and anticipation of looking for a book you have been waiting to read and going and finding it at the local library. For me, libraries are still like old trusted friends. Patient and kind, always there when you need them, non-judgmental, everything you want in a good friend.

I am honored to have served on the board of my public library for the past seven years. I have a voice to speak up for my friend, the library, and ask not only for financial support but I am also able to share my opinion on a number of issues and help make it a welcoming place for all members of my community.

I feel that I have come full circle, giving back a little bit of my time to a friend who has always stood by me throughout my life.

I hope you find your libraries friendly and knowledgeable places that welcome you when you walk in, irrespective of your age, gender, race, religion, and sexual identity. They are places where we can all explore, learn, and nurture new ideas.

It is incumbent on all of us to continue to support and enhance our public libraries. To ensure we pass on to our future generations the wisdom we gain when we open our minds and hearts to learn new ideas. Please support your public libraries not just with money but also with your time and input on enhancing their services. I promise you will find a good and lifelong friend in them, just as I did.

*Zurya Anjum, MD
Sartell, Minnesota
GRRL Board of Trustees Member*



2024 Year-End Campaign

You can support families like Adalyn’s, who rely on the Great River Regional Library. Adalyn, a local teenager, visits the library with her mom and four siblings often. As a homeschooling family, the library is a big part of their learning and fun.



Many users visit their library yearly to explore books, learn something new, and connect with others. **With your support,**

Great River Regional Library helps families continue reading and learning, bringing joy and knowledge into their lives. Adalyn shares, “[My family] has all loved the variety and amount of books at our library. We rarely look for a book that the library doesn’t have. We also really like borrowing books from the rest of the libraries in the Great River system.”

Families like Adalyn’s enjoy using the library. Their library cards give them free access to books, audiobooks, kits, and movies. Adalyn’s mom adds, “Using the library for picture books needed in our [homeschool] curriculum in the younger years has been a huge cost saver!”

During this season of giving, you can inspire families to read and grow!

Fill out and return the form below to show your support.

Featuring artwork by Maisie, GRRL library user.



2024 Year End Campaign

Each year, we ask for library supporters to provide a tax-deductible donation to the library’s year-end fundraising campaign. Your support will keep information and resources available-free of charge for Central Minnesota.

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On behalf of library users... Thank you!

- \$500 \$250 \$100 \$25 Other _____ (Checks payable to GRRL.)
- Please do NOT mail a thank you letter for this gift.
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Prefer to donate online? Visit us at griver.org/support-the-library or scan the code!

If different from what is shown, please tell us how your contact info should appear, so we may correct our files. _____

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Thank You Sponsors

Great River Regional Library would like to acknowledge its generous 2024 Summer Reading Challenge sponsors. Thank you for making a difference for the children in our community. Children received fun reading incentives, attended events at their local library, and had the resources to stay on track for school during the summertime, all thanks to your sponsorship! For our 2024 challenge, across 32 branch locations, we had a record-breaking 13,414 babies, children, and teens participate! Thank you for making their summer exciting and educational.

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