

Great Things

GREAT RIVER REGIONAL LIBRARY

2014 ANNUAL REPORT





Overall, 88% of Americans under 30 read a book in the past year, compared with 79% of those age 30 and older. Young adults have caught up to those in their thirties and forties in e-reading, with 37% of adults ages 18-29 reporting that they have read an e-book in the past year.

Pew Research Center, 2014

1,554,072
Patron visits during 2014

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Great River has a 45-year history of innovative collaboration and efficiency designed to provide excellent library services to our residents. Our equity of service philosophy guides us to deliver a deep shared collection and high quality technological access to all of our communities, regardless of their size. We continued this tradition of excellence in 2014.

Every day our dedicated staff delivers the top-notch service library users have come to expect. Our mission statement is "Explore, Learn, and Connect." Over 1.5 million people walked through our 32 doors last year to do just that. More than 15,000 joined us as new borrowers. We are seeing a greater interest in our virtual resources, where the percentage of borrowers using the Digital Library climbed to 24 percent in 2014.

This second year of our 2013-15 Strategic Plan brought focus on delivering services to meet the literacy, access, informed decisions, and lifelong learning needs of the residents in Benton, Morrison, Sherburne, Stearns, Todd and Wright counties. We added Book-a-Librarian services, providing on-demand one-on-one assistance to library users across the region. Our children's webpage was updated to include parent resources, including an Early Literacy Calendar. New online services, such as Ancestry.com, lynda.com, and RefUSA, delivered enhanced access to information for our patrons. We took on many exciting projects, providing high-quality experiences throughout the region. We brought book discussion, film, and theater experiences based on Harper Lee's classic "To Kill a Mockingbird" to over 900 students and adults in 12 communities, a National Endowment for the Arts Big Read program made possible by a partnership with Great River Educational Arts Theatre and supported by Minnesota's Arts & Cultural Heritage fund.

The more than 17,000 hours provided by our volunteers in 2014 demonstrate the strong public commitment to library service throughout our six counties. The generosity of our donors allowed us to sustain new initiatives, like Read Down Your Fines, which helps provide children a fresh start and renewed access to library services.

It is all of these aspects that make us Great River Regional Library. It has been an honor to lead our regional public library system during this transitional year. We are pleased to share our successes with you in this annual report. We are grateful for the support of everyone who made this possible. On behalf of the staff, I say we look forward to delivering more *Great Things* and being the place where our community residents *Explore, Learn, and Connect* in 2015.



Karen Pundsack
Interim Executive Director

Karen Pundsack

Karen Pundsack
Interim Executive Director

N_{oteworthy}

Long Term Director Resigns

Executive Director Kirsty Smith submitted her resignation in June 2014. "I have been honored in the trust placed in me in the past eight years," Smith said. "I have also been pleased to work with such wonderful people doing important work. I wish everyone well."

In July, the GRRL Board appointed Associate Director of Patron Services Karen Pundsack as interim executive director.

In November, the GRRL Board retained the services of John Keister & Associates to conduct an executive director search process.

Once Upon a Reader

GRRL and the state's other regional library systems collaborated on plans to provide Once Upon A Reader, a statewide one-book early literacy initiative, in 2014 and 2015 using revenue from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. The programming is based on "Moo!" written by David La Rochelle and illustrated by Mike Wohnoutka. "Moo!" won the 2014 Minnesota Book Award in Children's Literature.

Public Libraries in the United States Report

The "Public Libraries in the United States Survey" for 2012 was released in June by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services. The study finds that use of library services increased immediately following the recession, then began decreasing back to pre-recession levels. Even so, some measures, including programs and attendance, continue to increase. GRRL has experienced similar increases in these areas, especially since the addition of programs funded by Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

Libraries nationally continue to add to their digital holdings, and are seeing reduced use of public access computers. These findings are also true at GRRL where wireless use has increased significantly, possibly showing a trend favoring personal devices over desktop computers. Further findings include a correlation between decreases in library revenue and decreases in library usage.

Data for the report is gathered from 97 percent of public libraries in the country, including GRRL. It is available at www.ims.gov.

2013 Computer Uses





Internet Use

Computer workstations

2014 203,110 sessions

2013 212,244 sessions

Wireless Internet

2014 71,075 uses

2013 60,907 uses

The decline in computer workstation use is balanced by a similar increase in wireless use. This may be because of increased ownership of tablets and devices such as smart phones.

T echnology Impact Survey

impact survey
Advancing libraries through community insight



In April, GRRL used an online survey to gather information from library users about the impact of GRRL's public computers and technology resources. The library received 772 responses. Results included:

99% (767) of respondents visited the library at least once in the past 12 months.

Of those who did, 53% (405) visited once a week or more frequently

94% (727) of respondents accessed library resources from the website outside the library. Of those, 67% (486) did so once a week or more frequently

53% (407) used a computer in the library to access the Internet during the past 12 months

28% of respondents said they use GRRL technology services for educational activities

The largest group (25% of respondents) were between the ages of 45-54

52% asked a staff member or volunteer for assistance using library computers


85% had alternative Internet access. Reasons cited for using library computers included lack of access to high speed Internet at home, gaps in access such as when moving or during power outages, household competition, during lunch breaks or while out running errands or as a supplement to the library catalog

86% said it is important or very important to have public access to computers and the Internet available in our communities

86% said they were either satisfied or very satisfied with access at the library

52% had completed a four-year degree or postgraduate study

The Impact Survey is the result of a research initiative from the University of Washington with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.



Total Items Checked Out

2014 3,625,882

2013 3,931,918

Digital Checkouts (eBooks and eAudiobooks)

2014 148,143

2013 111,257

Total number of patrons checking out digital titles increased to 9,393 from 8,255.

3,625,882 MILLION

Items Checked Out

Early Literacy Calendars

GRRL helps families by providing activities that develop literacy and support literacy education in our schools. In 2014, GRRL introduced monthly Early Literacy Calendars. The calendars feature daily activities which are easy to do with young children, and can be part of a sustained early literacy program.

Activities include playing, reading, singing, talking, and writing. For example: play at being a firefighter putting out a fire; sing the song 'You Are My Sunshine' to someone you love; and write your name in a tray of pudding.



Reaching Out To Teens

The social and school pressures on teens can pull them away from library use, even if they have been frequent users as children. Special efforts were made in 2014 to reach out to teens and keep them engaged. Teen advisory meetings were held in six libraries, soliciting ideas for teen programs. At the St. Cloud Public Library, a Teen Advisory Group is providing homework help for younger children on weekends.

Read Down Your Fines

Read Down Your Fines was introduced in 2013. This program makes it possible for teens and children to eliminate fines on their cards by reading in the library. Success in 2013 led to its repeat in 2014, with special 'Read Down Your Fines' weeks taking place in April, October and December. To date, more than 500 juveniles have been able to renew their full participation in library activities through this fundraiser supported effort.

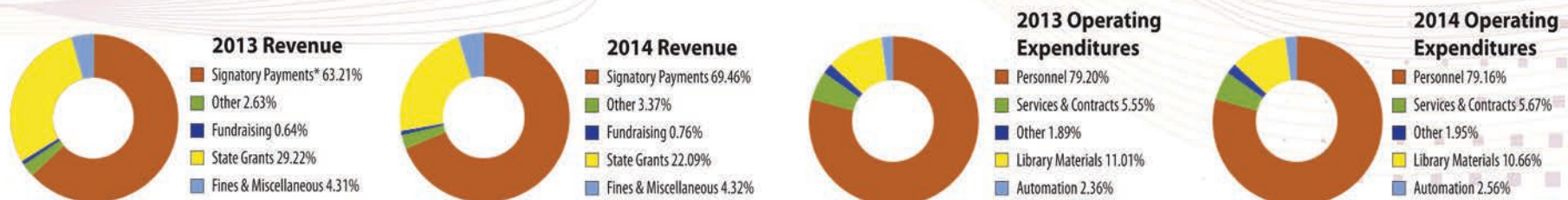
Digital Programming Focus

The digital divide threatens to separate people from services along both age and economic lines. Older adults may be intimidated by technology, and some may not be able to afford services at home. GRRL put greater focus on digital literacy programming in 2014, with classes that ran the gamut from basic email to digital photography to 3D printing.



Financial Analysis

Overall 2014 revenue was \$9,322,623.85, a decrease of 7.35% over the 2013 figure of \$10,007,849.28. The decrease in revenue is mainly due to the timing of our Regional Library Basic System Support and Regional Library Telecommunications Act and Arts and Cultural Heritage funding being received. Total operational expenditures decreased by 3.09% from \$8,511,769.23 in 2013 to \$8,256,629.40 in 2014, a decrease of \$255,139.83. This was due primarily to high level position retirements and reallocation of staffing resources in some key departments. Diligent spending and being fiscally conservative under tight budget restraints also played a part in this reduction.



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

Book-a-Librarian

Patrons are now able to book a librarian for uninterrupted one-on-one assistance. A librarian based in St. Cloud will travel to any GRRL location for appointments, and is able to provide assistance on research, use of library technology, or other projects.



“Book-a-Librarian” became part of GRRL’s service offerings after a pilot project was completed in June. Through the pilot project, GRRL learned that the service was most successful using an on-demand model rather than a drop-in service.

The new appointment procedure is simple, and a librarian will be available at any of GRRL’s 32 locations, often within days. The most frequent interactions in the early days of this initiative have been related to digital literacy and Digital Library instruction.

Ancestry for Libraries, lynda.com and ProQuest Research Companion Added to Databases



GRRL added Ancestry for Libraries, lynda.com and ProQuest Research Companion to its suite of databases in 2014.

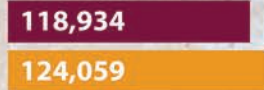
Ancestry for Libraries is a powerful genealogy research tool providing access to 7,000 databases and millions of unique, full-text primary sources, and enhanced images. Ancestry for Libraries is easy to use. Many people will be able to track family history back numerous generations in just a few fun online sessions. Due to licensing agreements, this resource will only be accessible in library buildings and via GRRL’s wireless connection.

lynda.com is an online computer skills tutorial database including thousands of modules providing instruction in hundreds of topics, from animation to web conferencing. lynda.com includes more than 80 tutorials on Excel. It includes more than 30 social media marketing courses and more than 30 network administration courses, each with more than 900 video tutorials. No other online source provides the breadth of instruction for technology skills. It even includes playlists designed for topics such as *Design and Create a Website*. lynda.com was previously unavailable to libraries and available only on a business subscription model.

ProQuest Research Companion is designed to guide students through the process of writing a research paper. As GRRL continues to build strong collaboration with schools, Research Companion is a resource intended to supplement learning and homework help outside the classroom. Like most of GRRL’s other online resources, Research Companion is available for use in-library as well as at home.



Library Cardholders



Library Visitors



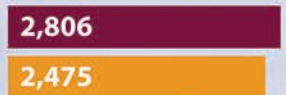
Checkout Sessions



Website Visitors to griver.org



Library Programs



Program Attendance



Items in Collection



2014 2013

Cokato Library Renovated

The Cokato Public Library reopened on Thursday, April 24, after substantial renovation. The renovation included a new checkout desk and computer table, interesting art, attractive furnishing and light fixtures, and new flooring throughout. The renovation also enabled staff to set up a new, small teen area with a bistro table.

For several years, staff had been in conversation with the City of Cokato and library supporters about the need to move the library or improve the library space. The successful resolution of those conversations is due to cooperation between GRRL staff, the Friends of the Cokato Area Library, volunteers and city staff.



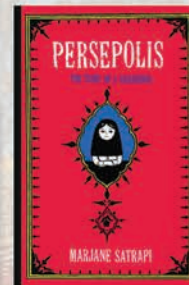
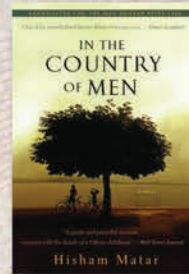
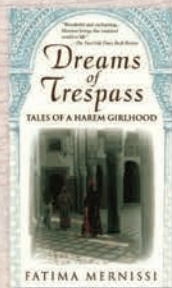
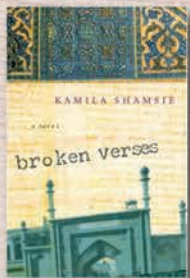
The library is a place to learn, read, and have fun...
a place the whole family can enjoy.

GREAT EVENTS

Muslim Journeys Program Series

GRRL purchased a collection of books and presented a lecture and discussion series titled "Bridging Cultures: Muslim Journeys" through grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and American Library Association (ALA). The library partnered with the College of St. Benedict Clemens Library to offer the programs. College of Saint Benedict Professor of Political Science Dr. Manju Parikh served as the project scholar. Discussions took place at the St. Cloud Public Library. They began at the end of April 2014, with one book being discussed every two weeks. The titles were:

- "In the Country of Men" by Hisham Matar
 - "Persepolis" by Marjane Satrapi
 - "House of Stone" by Anthony Shadid
 - "Broken Verses" by Kamila Shamsie
 - "Dreams of Trespass" by Fatima Mernissi
- They presented a variety of viewpoints on Muslim life.



Northstar Grant Collaboration

GRRL was a participant in a Library Services Technology Act grant project written by the Minnesota Literacy Council, the St. Paul Friends of the Library, and St. Paul Public Library.

GRRL, St. Cloud Adult Basic Education (ABE), and the Workforce Center partnered to provide free basic computer skills instruction during August. Through the grant funding, a Somali liaison was contracted to work with the library and ABE. The computer classes aligned with the Northstar Digital Literacy Standards, a Minnesota-developed digital literacy initiative that details specific skills adults need to know and master to become computer literate.

73,359

Patrons Attended Programs



Children's Web Page Revamped

GRRL improved its web page for children, www.griver.org/kids. Content is now organized into separate pages for ages 0 to 5, 6 to 8, 9 to 12, Parents and Summer Reading Program. Each page includes reading recommendations, activities and other information. Content and links on the pages are now geared more explicitly toward literacy and education. More than ever before, griver.org/kids will reward families who explore its content.





303 Great Staff Members

Our Great Staff Members

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Anne K. Zabinski
Julie A. Zellie
Karen E. Zeug

Administrative Team



Collection Development
Jami Trenam
Associate Director

Manages all staff and processes associated with library materials. This includes selection, acquisition, cataloging, processing, distribution, evaluation, repair and removal of all library materials both physical and electronic.

"As the way people use libraries evolves, it is essential to employ data-driven methods to proactively predict emerging trends and mindfully respond to patron and community needs."



Public Relations
Julie Henne
Associate Director

Responsible for internal and external communications, raising awareness of GRRL services in the region with marketing and program publicity, providing accurate and timely information, and nurturing private partnerships via fund development activities.

"GRRL is an excellent public library system. It provides high value returns on the investment provided by public and private funds. Explaining that to the public can be difficult, but it's a great story to tell."



Human Resources
Sunny M. Hesse, PHR
Associate Director

Responsible for supporting the goals and challenges of GRRL by providing solutions to workplace matters that promote fair treatment of staff, open communication, personal accountability, and support and optimize the strategic initiatives of GRRL.

"We pride ourselves in offering a consistent level of service throughout the region. The training opportunities we provide are one of the many experiences that assist GRRL staff in identifying efficient processes and procedures to best use our resources and provide great services to our patrons."



Information Technology
Jay Roos
Associate Director

Ensures that GRRL has the technology systems required to effectively and efficiently deliver library service throughout GRRL's large geographic service area.

"This was a year of updating and retooling IT systems to follow industry best practices and set us up to do great things in coming years."



Patron Services
Karen Pundsack
Associate Director

Oversees information, programming, and circulation services throughout the region. Responsible for patron notification and collection agency processes. Compiles statistics for state library and other reporting. Works to ensure library buildings and open hours meet community, patron, and staff needs.

"We have placed a greater emphasis on our digital literacy and early literacy services this year to serve the needs of our communities."

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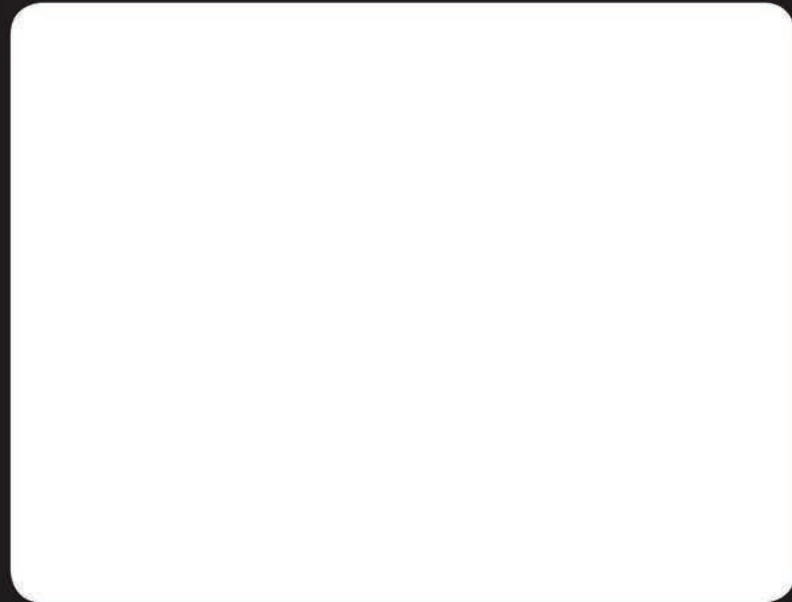
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 BECKER JEANNETTE BURKHARDT
 BELGRADE KATHIE HARRIS
 BIG LAKE NANCY LEE, TERRY PFLEGHAAR (CURRENT)
 BUFFALO AMY WITTMANN
 CLEARWATER CYRENE BASTIEN

COKATO SHEILA RIEKE
 COLD SPRING SUSAN WATTS
 DELANO CAROL PLOCHER
 EAGLE BEND ELLEN PETERS, CATHY PERISH (CURRENT)
 ELK RIVER WILL HOLLERICH
 FOLEY JUDY WEIS
 GREY EAGLE JENNIFER SHATTUCK
 HOWARD LAKE DEBORAH COX-JOHNSON
 KIMBALL CARLA ASFELD
 LITTLE FALLS STEPHEN MILLER, CINDY BRUGGENTHIES (CURRENT)
 LONG PRAIRIE NANCY POTTER
 MELROSE JAN ATKINSON
 MONTICELLO DEB LUKEN

PAYNESVILLE GRETCHEN VORK
 PIERZ GRACE HESCHKE
 RICHMOND SUSAN WATTS
 ROCKFORD THERESA JACOBS
 ROYALTON LINDA MUELLER
 ST. CLOUD JAMI TRENAM, RYAN MCCORMICK (CURRENT)
 ST. MICHAEL MARLA SCHERBER
 SAUK CENTRE DAWN SHAY
 STAPLES ELLEN PETERS, CATHY PERISH (CURRENT)
 SWANVILLE STEPHEN MILLER, CINDY BRUGGENTHIES (CURRENT)
 UPSALA WANDA ERICKSON
 WAITE PARK MARILYN PATTERSON



Check out the GRRL Wish List on griver.org.