



Agenda: Board of Trustees
October 3, 2024, at 4 pm
Conference Room, Downtown Library

Literacy, Access, & Inclusion

Library Board President – Monica Challenger

- A. Call to Order
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
 - o Minutes: September 5, 2024
- C. Public Comments and Communications
- D. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
- F. Board Education: Banned Books Week – Amber McNamara
- G. Library Board Committee Reports
 - o Advocacy Committee – Elisabeth Hepworth, Committee Chair
 - No Action
 - o Building Committee – Jade Hart, Committee Chair
 - No Action
 - o Finance Committee – Chris Casey, Committee Chair
 - No Action
 - o Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
 - **Action:** Policy 4.01 Meeting Rooms
 - **Action:** Policy 4.02 Public Display Art
 - **Action:** Policy 4.07 Philanthropic Naming and Recognition
 - **Action:** Westside Library Recognition Opportunities
- H. Library Director's Report
- I. Old Business
- J. New Business
- K. Adjournment

The next Board of Trustees meeting is **November 7, 2024 at 4 pm**, in the Conference Room, Downtown Library.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a City program, service, or activity, should contact Jessica Musil, Library Administrative Assistant, at 319.261.7323 or email musilj@crlibrary.org as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the meeting.

DRAFT Meeting Minutes
Cedar Rapids Public Library
Board of Trustees
September 5, 2024

Board members in attendance: [President] Monica Challenger, Jade Hart, Chris Casey, Susie McDermott, Ana McClain (in person); Elisabeth Hepworth, Rafael Jacobo (via Zoom)

Board members unable to attend: [Vice President] Jeremy Elges, Hassan Selim

Staff in attendance: Dara Schmidt, Amber McNamara, Jessica Musil, Kevin Delecki, Todd Simonson (in person); Patrick Duggan (via Zoom)

Others: Charity Tyler, Executive Director, Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation; Libby Slappey, President, Friends of the Cedar Rapids Public Library (via Zoom)

- A. Call to Order
 - Ms. Challenger called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.
- B. Consent Agenda – **Action**
 - Minutes:
 - August 1, 2024

Ms. McClain moved to accept the consent agenda. Ms. Hart seconded. The action carried with unanimous approval.
- C. Public Comments and Communications
 - There being none, the meeting continued
- D. Foundation Report – Charity Tyler
 - Ms. Tyler reported that the Foundation celebrated Westside Library project donors at an event on August 15. Sixty-six individuals attended and received updates on the projects as well as the initial invitation to the groundbreaking event on October 18.
 - The Foundation has another event slated for September 22. The Van Vechten Society Brunch is an annual event, honors those who include the library or Foundation into their estate plans. Later this year, the Foundation looks forward to adding more bricks to the Van Vechten donor wall, which is adjacent near the 4th Avenue entrance at the downtown library.
- E. Friends of the Library Report – Libby Slappey
 - Ms. Slappey reported. Farmers Market sales concluded for the planned events. However, the sales team is adding a final Farmers Market sale to feature media on September 21. A large donation of music CDs and other media made the sale possible.

Ms. McDermott joined the meeting at 4:08 pm.

- The Friends are also preparing for their large weekend sale at the downtown library, which takes place on November 1-3.
- F. Board Education: Summer Reading Challenge Recap – Kevin Delecki
 - This past year, library staff intentionally improved the Summer Reading Challenge with three goals in mind: 1) simplify the program to increase participation; 2) engage adults/parents of readers; and 3) increase participation targets.
 - In order to simplify the program, we eliminated the requirement to register and track reading online, and re-established paper logs. The feedback was immediately positive and improved engagement with patrons as well as interactions with staff. This year, 240 children ages 0-5 completed the program with paper log versus 211 children total in 2019-2023. Teen completions also jumped from last year (10) to 72 in 2024. Ms. Casey asked if staff enter paper records for data analysis. Yes, patrons can turn in logs and staff

would enter data into Beanstack so we could track their information along with digital users.

- Adult engagement also showed a significant increase for enrollments and completions. Of those to enroll, 57.6% completed the program. In past years, completions averaged around 28%.
- Participation data indicated further success. Completions tallied to 1,358, far exceeding the goal of 400. Program attendance was about 4,000 more than last summer. The community as a whole reported over three million minutes read. The 2023 program's minutes read were approximately 987,000.
- Reducing barriers to completions and participation improved the program for many in our community. The programming team look forward to summer 2025. They plan to evaluate programs and outreach opportunities, update collateral based on feedback, and expand partnerships for school-age children.
- Board members offered their congratulations on a successful program. Ms. Challenger loved the story about the teen reading 30,000 minutes over the summer. Ms. McClain felt more excitement in her family with the paper logs and grand prize opportunities. Both Ms. Casey and Ms. Hart agreed that the paper log is a great tool for equity. Mr. Delecki noted that we used paper logs last summer for Books by Mail patrons and they loved being able to participate because technology was a barrier. Ms. Hepworth felt the paper log helped her family stay accountable with reading because of the excitement to color in the shapes on the kids' paper log.

G. Library Board Committee Reports

- Advocacy Committee – Elisabeth Hepworth, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Hepworth reported no action from the committee other than remind trustees to mark their calendars for the Westside Library groundbreaking event. Ms. Schmidt also noted that on Tuesday, Sept. 10 at noon, the City Council will approve the final rezoning of the land as well as the construction bid award. Ms. Tyler and Ms. Hepworth plan to speak during public comment in support of the library. Ms. McNamara is developing talking points for anyone who wishes to express their thanks and support.
- Building Committee – Jade Hart, Committee Chair
 - This committee is now the Building Committee instead of Westside Project Committee. We've had multiple large scale and complex building needs at the downtown library, such as the roof repair and plaza refresh. The Leadership of the Board committee felt it'd be advantageous to have a committee provide feedback and oversight.
- Finance Committee – Chris Casey, Committee Chair
 - Ms. Casey reported on the July Financial memo. At this time, we don't have July financial spreadsheets – they will be presented next month. Final FY24 numbers should come by November, following the City's close-out and audit process. At this time, Ms. Schmidt reports that FY24 closed out with a surplus of \$380.
 - **Action:** Resolution Westside Library Construction Bid Award
 - Ms. Schmidt reported that the Westside Library construction was projected to cost \$17,850,000 and the lowest construction bid from Garling Construction came in at \$15,525,000.
 - The City Council will formally approve for awarding Garling Construction the construction bid award on Sept. 10, following library board approval. The resolution is in the packet.

The resolution to approve Garling Construction, in the amount of \$15,525,000, as the construction company for the Westside Library project passed with unanimous approval.

- Personnel and Policy Committee – Susie McDermott, Committee Chair
 - Ms. McDermott shared that the committee did not meet last month so there is no discussion item at this time.

H. Library Director's Report

- Ms. Schmidt reported. Recently, library staff met with OPN to discuss additions to the Westside Library project with the construction being underbid. Ms. Schmidt is trying to be thoughtful and ensure a reasonable project to achieve financial goals. For example, with federal rebates, we can add solar panels and be a net zero library at opening. Another item under consideration is on-site battery storage to store our own power and operate the building fully for up to six hours. Ms. McClain asked about other grants or other funding opportunities for disaster resiliency. We are not eligible for federal grants as it requires everything in the project has to come from the United States. There may be other opportunities if the grant is not specifically tied to the building's construction. Ms. Hart asked about the contingency budget. With the additional funds, we want to increase that budget as well. Some items can't be brought back into the project because it would impact the overall design. However, we could allocate money to furniture, equipment, shelving, and landscaping features.

Ms. McClain left the meeting at 4:46 pm

I. Old Business

- There being no old business, the meeting continued.

J. New Business

- There being no new business, the meeting continued.

K. Adjournment

- There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:50 pm.

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, October 3, 2024, at 4 pm in the Conference Room, Downtown Library

To: Chris Casey, Finance Committee Chair
From: Dara Schmidt
Date: 9/26/2024
Subject: October Meeting Financial Report

I have reviewed the August 2024 financial information for Library. Please see attached reports. When reviewing budget to actual, we assume:

- At least 1/12 of revenue will be received per month (16.7% thru Aug). Actual revenues are expected to meet or exceed budgeted amounts.
- No more than 1/12 of discretionary, fleet, facilities, and fuel budget is spent per month (8% thru August since due to processing times, these expenses normally have a 1 month lag).

Here are highlights or concerns that you should be aware of, or that need addressed:

Operations – 151XXX:

- **Total revenues (excluding transfers in) are above budget at \$220K or 26% of the \$829K budget.**
- **Total expenditures (excluding transfers out) are \$1.6M or 20% of the \$8.1M budget.**
 - Personal Services are above budget at \$1.1M or 17.1% of the \$6.2M budget (the budget includes reduction of \$141K for refresh).
 - Total discretionary expenses are high at \$278K or 33% of the \$852K budget. This is because of beginning of fiscal year contracts and should even out as the year goes one.
 - Other expenses are high at \$298K or 29% of the \$1.04M budget.
 - Full fiscal year of Ladd Library rent has posted to 524100.
 - Facilities Maintenance has posted thru July for \$22K.
 - Account changes effective July / FY 2025:
 - There are multiple line-item level changes for the entire city starting in FY25. Most of these do not directly relate to library regular expenses. A few of note are:
 - New account for non-routine/etc City facility costs instead of using class codes.
 - New account 522111 will be called “Non-routine Facility Charges” and will replace former use of account 522107 and class code 08101
 - No longer budgeting or being billed: Charges for City Accounting Services (521113), City Administrative Charges (see above), and City Information Technology Services (522109) charges will not be physically allocated or budgeted to departments unless there is a financial benefit to the City to charge the department. For instance, a general fund department charging a general fund department does not provide a City financial benefit, does not necessarily represent the true cost of a program, grosses up expenses, and ultimately creates unnecessary work by Finance to process.

Special Revenue – 7010XX:

- Total revenues are below target at \$9K or 5% of the \$200K budget.
- Total expenditures (excluding transfers out) are \$30.6K or 5% of the \$560K budget.
 - Personal Services is currently on track with budget at 11% or \$19K of budgeted \$169K.

CIP – 316XXX:

- Total expenditures (excluding transfers out) are \$2.17M or 20% of the \$10.6M budget.

City of Cedar Rapids
 151 General Fund - Library
 2024-08-31

Account Name	Account	Prior Fiscal Year 2024 YTD Actuals	Current Fiscal Year 2025 Adjusted Budget	Current Fiscal Year 2025 YTD Actuals	Favorable (Unfavorable) Variance	Percent of Budget Received Spent	Current Month 2025 Actuals
Revenue							
Taxes							
Total Taxes		-	-	-	-	0%	-
Intergovernmental Revenue							
State Operating	422001	-	115,000.00	-	(115,000.00)	0%	-
Local Govt Grants and Reimb	423000	(195,740.44)	300,000.00	191,240.44	(108,759.56)	64%	-
Total Intergovernmental Revenue		(195,740.44)	415,000.00	191,240.44	(223,759.56)	46%	-
Other Revenue							
Printing & Duplicating of Form	431006	5,320.95	25,000.00	5,267.40	(19,732.60)	21%	2,922.65
Dept Charges-External to City	431012	400,563.74	259,792.00	12,615.72	(247,176.28)	5%	224.44
Library User Fees - Not Fines	431201	1,567.39	10,600.00	2,536.30	(8,063.70)	24%	1,433.15
Building Rental	461001	8,171.40	43,455.00	7,992.40	(35,462.60)	18%	2,808.20
Postage / Handling	471001	7.00	-	-	-	0%	-
Contributions & Donations	471002	4,987.00	70,000.00	-	(70,000.00)	0%	-
Sale of Inventory	471003	62.00	2,000.00	105.50	(1,894.50)	5%	84.50
Damage Recoveries	471004	25.00	-	-	-	0%	-
Other Miscellaneous Revenue	471005	25.00	3,500.00	-	(3,500.00)	0%	-
Cash Over (Under)	471007	(8.34)	-	1.75	1.75	0%	(1.70)
Total Other Revenue		420,721.14	414,347.00	28,519.07	(385,827.93)	7%	7,471.24
Proceeds of Long Term Liabilities							
Total Proceeds of Long Term Liabilities		-	-	-	-	0%	-
Transfers In							
Total Transfers In		-	-	-	-	0%	-
Total Revenue		224,980.70	829,347.00	219,759.51	(609,587.49)	26%	7,471.24
Expenditures							
Personal Services							
Regular Employees	511100	696,753.09	4,379,864.00	757,548.99	3,622,315.01	17%	367,675.30
Temporary/Seasonal Employees	511200	7,759.50	43,368.40	9,828.00	33,540.40	23%	6,486.00
Overtime	511300	11,937.40	114,773.40	12,125.44	102,647.96	11%	10,816.67
Other Special Pays	511400	3,093.04	17,158.00	-	17,158.00	0%	-
Group Insurance	512100	106,059.65	818,207.00	126,786.61	691,420.39	15%	62,891.53
Social Security Contributions	512200	48,349.31	348,485.00	63,577.19	284,907.81	18%	38,236.85
Retirement Contribution	512300	60,326.06	431,057.00	79,382.38	351,674.62	18%	47,792.10
Workers' Compensation	512500	11,105.58	61,747.00	11,211.91	50,535.09	18%	6,708.66
Other Employee Benefits	512600	1,875.10	3,162.00	502.97	2,659.03	16%	281.21
Total Personal Services		947,258.73	6,217,821.80	1,060,963.49	5,156,858.31	17.1%	540,888.32
Discretionary Expenses							
Advertising & Marketing	521100	1,112.85	5,000.00	2,943.11	2,056.89	59%	2,943.11
Consulting & Technical Service	521104	-	10,000.00	-	10,000.00	0%	-
External Contracted Labor	521105	79,056.91	125,466.00	4,699.49	120,766.51	4%	4,699.49
Health Services	521106	50.15	-	79.65	(79.65)	0%	79.65
Legal Services	521107	1,457.00	-	-	-	0%	-
Other Professional Services	521108	536.00	9,523.63	49.38	9,474.25	1%	49.38
External Banking/Financial Fee	521109	1,434.51	20,700.00	1,454.96	19,245.04	7%	1,454.96
Security Services	521110	-	5,000.00	348.77	4,651.23	7%	348.77
Computer Hardware	522100	26,442.75	35,000.00	29,826.12	5,173.88	85%	1,890.72
Computer Software Maintenance	522101	164,108.24	222,220.00	163,206.60	59,013.40	73%	161,897.60
IT Services - External	522102	4,561.67	75,500.00	3,515.89	71,984.11	5%	2,916.49
Building & Grounds Services	522104	-	15,000.00	1,886.40	13,113.60	13%	1,584.83
Equip/Furniture/Fixtures Serv	522105	-	9,000.00	2,980.00	6,020.00	33%	400.00
Phone Services	523107	4,955.99	35,950.00	5,588.23	30,361.77	16%	3,094.94
Rental of Equip & Vehicles	524101	980.80	500.00	-	500.00	0%	-
Printing, Binding, & Duplicate	525102	203.75	15,950.00	194.30	15,755.70	1%	871.70
Awards & Recognition	531102	-	250.00	-	250.00	0%	-
Books & Subscriptions	531103	69,722.84	109,171.80	43,148.87	66,022.93	40%	13,351.55
Cleaning & Janitorial Supplies	531105	-	1,250.00	46.89	1,203.11	4%	46.89
Computer Supplies	531106	538.92	5,000.00	76.37	4,923.63	2%	50.88
Equipment/Furniture/Fixtures	531109	1,739.20	11,500.00	721.17	10,778.83	6%	531.17
Photography Supplies	531110	-	300.00	-	300.00	0%	-
Miscellaneous Supplies	531114	-	2,000.00	-	2,000.00	0%	-
Office Supplies	531116	2,164.40	15,320.00	2,913.52	12,406.48	19%	1,546.26
Paint Supplies	531117	-	-	21.72	(21.72)	0%	21.72
Program Supplies	531118	5,004.66	37,000.00	8,851.97	28,148.03	24%	6,455.00
Shop Supplies	531119	-	250.00	84.63	165.37	34%	84.63
Sign & Signal Supplies	531120	113.78	-	-	-	0%	-
Uniforms	531123	-	1,694.00	-	1,694.00	0%	-
Personal Protective Gear	531124	51.63	-	82.52	(82.52)	0%	21.46

City of Cedar Rapids
 151 General Fund - Library
 2024-08-31

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Building & Grounds Supplies	533100	4,362.02	34,241.28	633.08	33,608.20	2%	633.08
Equip/Furniture/Fixtures Parts	533101	-	-	884.09	(884.09)	0%	1,024.29
Conferences, Training, Travel	542102	5,280.67	23,200.00	77.00	23,123.00	0%	(522.00)
Dues & Memberships	542103	781.00	10,000.00	-	10,000.00	0%	-
Licensing Fees	542106	-	-	2,249.00	(2,249.00)	0%	-
Postage & Freight	542108	814.80	13,500.00	944.54	12,555.46	7%	854.49
Mileage Reimbursement	542111	202.10	3,000.00	454.92	2,545.08	15%	326.55
Total Discretionary Expenses		375,676.64	852,486.71	277,963.19	574,523.52	33%	206,657.61
Other Expenses							
City Accounting Services	521113	14,250.00	-	-	-	0%	-
Administrative Area Charges	521114	125.00	-	-	-	0%	-
Routine City Facility Charges	522107	1,102.40	325,603.18	22,955.77	302,647.41	7%	22,422.17
Routine City Fleet Charges	522108	-	1,150.00	1,703.38	(553.38)	148%	1,703.38
City Information Tech Services	522109	1,028.70	-	-	-	0%	-
Electricity	523100	44,231.10	243,800.00	16,416.54	227,383.46	7%	16,416.54
Natural Gas	523103	34.32	4,500.00	70.47	4,429.53	2%	48.00
Rental of Land & Buildings	524100	219,752.54	249,000.00	220,663.29	28,336.71	89%	3,513.75
Liability Insurance	525104	8,505.34	46,866.00	8,768.22	38,097.78	19%	4,862.72
Property Insurance	525107	22,654.66	162,212.00	27,035.34	135,176.66	17%	13,517.67
Vehicle Insurance	525108	216.66	1,500.00	250.00	1,250.00	17%	125.00
Gasoline Fuel	532101	-	498.58	86.48	412.10	17%	86.48
Total Other Expenses		311,900.72	1,035,129.76	297,949.49	737,180.27	29%	62,695.71
Capital Outlay							
Total Capital Outlay		-	-	-	-	0%	-
Debt Service							
Total Debt Service		-	-	-	-	0%	-
Transfers Out							
Transfer Out-Inter	571100	-	20,000.00	-	20,000.00	0%	-
Total Transfers Out		-	20,000.00	-	20,000.00	0%	-
Total Expenditures		1,634,836.09	8,125,438.27	1,636,876.17	6,488,562.10	20%	810,241.64
Net Revenues over/(under) Expenditures		(1,409,855.39)	(7,296,091.27)	(1,417,116.66)	5,878,974.61		(802,770.40)

Meeting Rooms

At the Cedar Rapids Public Library we value civic engagement. We demonstrate that value by serving our community with a variety of accessible public spaces for meetings, programs, training sessions, and events. In full support of free expression of ideas, the library Board of Trustees neither approves nor disapproves of any particular program or its content.

1. Food is allowed in all meeting rooms ~~except the Technology Classroom~~.
2. Room capacities must be observed.
3. Rooms must be reserved by adults age 18 or older.
4. The library is not responsible for loss or damage to the private property of individuals or organizations using meeting facilities. An outside organization may be required to submit evidence that the organization is covered by general liability.
5. Deliberate misuse of or damage to library meeting rooms or equipment may result in billing the user for damages and/or refusing any further requests for meeting room use. All use of meeting rooms is subject to the Library's Behavior Policy.
6. Library programs and events take precedence over any other use of civic space. The library may cancel a reservation or change room assignments for library business.
7. In keeping with our goal of open access for all, the library does not charge for use of civic space with specific exceptions. Library facilities are available for celebrations and commerce - including, but not limited to: parties, weddings, and a variety of activities. Room use charges apply to events:
 - Requiring additional staffing time
 - Charging a fee to attendees
 - Where funds are exchanged
 - Where fundraising occurs
 - Held on the LivingLearning Roof or in the Library Commons
 - Outside regular library hours
8. To achieve our goal of being open and welcoming to all, only Library approved signage or postings, typically in the form of listings outside rooms, may be used to promote or direct people to events being held in Library spaces. All postings and signage within rooms must be displayed in the designated space only and not in full view of public spaces.

Adopted: 03/29/90

Revised: 05/25/95, 12/02/99, 02/05/04, 05/08/07, 11/4/10; 2/06/20, 02/03/22, 10/03/24

Reviewed: 2013, 11/15

Public Display Art Policy

At the Cedar Rapids Public Library we value civic engagement and free expression of ideas. We recognize the tension between providing organizations with opportunities to express their ideas and the need for an uncluttered, professional library facility.

Exhibits shall have one or more of these attributes:

- High quality, original art by Iowa artists;
- A theme related to Library services, collections or programs;
- The ability to bring together Library materials from several subject areas which relate to a theme of current interest;
- The ability to inform patrons of current issues, events or other subjects of public interest.
- The ability to heighten the Library's presence and impact in the community.

In order to display art, the following must be understood by all parties:

1. The library assumes no responsibility for theft, loss, damage or destruction of items on display.
2. All displays must meet existing State and Federal laws on obscenity, libel, defamation of character and invasion of privacy.
3. The library does not accept responsibility for ensuring that all points of view are represented in any single display. Permission to display materials does not imply library endorsement of content, nor will the library accept responsibility for the accuracy of statements made in such materials.
4. Displays of original art will be accepted by library staff. The Library reserves the right to refuse exhibits which, in its opinion, do not further the library's mission. By choosing not to display any art, the library is not commenting on the value or importance of that art.
5. The group or individual preparing the display may include name, contact information, and price of work (if applicable.) Sales are between artist and buyer.
6. The library will designate spaces for particular types of displays to make best use of display units and/or to make displays accessible to the intended audience. The library will seek to be innovative and flexible in the display and use of art.
7. All displays must adhere to established guidelines for installation.

A single group or individual may be limited to a single display in a twelve-month period. Length and parameters of all displays are determined by Library staff.

Adopted: 06/03/2010

Revised: 12/2010; 2/2011; 01/02/2020, 10/6/2022

Reviewed: 2013, 11/2015, 10/03/2024

Philanthropic Naming and Recognition Policy

The naming of all library buildings and spaces associated with a construction, renovation or expansion project is the responsibility of the library Board of Trustees. Their consideration will be guided by the following criteria:

Cedar Rapids Public Library (CRPL) will consider naming part of the building, other property or interior space after an individual, foundation, organization or corporation in recognition of substantial financial gifts to the CRPL Foundation. Donors making such gifts may choose to ~~memorialize~~ honor someone other than themselves with the financial gift, subject to approval.

The CRPL Foundation will seek financial contributions commensurate with the honor sought and companionable with the mission of the library. Naming opportunities need not be cost reflective, rather they would provide prominent recognition of outstanding service contributions or generosity to the library.

Facilities subject to the guidelines include:

- Library building or major renovation
- Interior spaces or service areas
- Outdoor spaces - gardens, courtyards, walkways, or plazas
- Amenities such as a fireplace, artwork
- Primary or specialty collections

Generally library facilities are named in accordance with their geographical or functional designations. However, naming a library building as a whole will be considered by the library Board of Trustees on a case-by-case basis under extraordinary circumstances. General guidelines for consideration:

- The significance of the donation in relation to the project
- Alignment with the Library's vision, mission, and values
- The reputation and integrity of the donor
- The history of the donor's support of libraries and Library priorities
- The scope and timing of a project in progress

Opportunities for recognition in interior and exterior spaces, collections, programs, amenities and fixtures may be offered to major donors contributing a substantial sum in response to a specific fundraising drive. Lists of potential recognition opportunities will be developed by trustees in collaboration with the Library Foundation prior to a fundraising campaign and presented to the library Board of Trustees for advanced approval. Any naming opportunities associated with other collaborative city projects will be offered after consultation with the City Manager or assigned City Director.

Donor Recognition Versus Property Naming

Donations received for equipping or furnishing a library area, that do not include the cost of building or renovating the space, can be given recognition through an appropriate plaque or alternative means

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within or adjacent to the space. This shall not constitute the “naming” of the space. When the equipment or furnishing becomes outdated, dysfunctional or is retired, the recognition will be withdrawn.

- All naming recognition must be consistent with the nature and mission of the library. In this regard, due attention shall be given to both long-term and short-term appropriateness of naming.
- When a proposal involves the use of the name of any person, approval is contingent on the agreement of that person.
- When a proposal involves the use of the name of a deceased person, approval is contingent on the agreement of that person’s next of kin.
- The library Board of Trustees reserves the right to change or remove the recognition should a significant change occur in the circumstances of the donor.

Visual Recognition

The Library Director, in consultation with the library design team, will be responsible for determining the manner in which the name is recognized (e.g. signage).

The Foundation will explain the library’s naming policy to the donor, work with the donor to determine a suitable display based on policy guidelines and ask the donor to sign a naming agreement. Any commemoration technique must be consistent with the library’s image and design requirements and is subject to review and approval by the library Board of Trustees.

Duration and Change of Use

Naming rights agreements will be in place for a specified number of years. In general, property naming rights will remain in place for the useful life of the building or area.

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When a change in the use of a previously named facility occurs because a program moves/ends or space is reassigned or demolished, the Board of Trustees may determine some form of continuing recognition to may be appropriate.

~~In general, property naming rights will remain in place for the useful life of the building or area, not to exceed a period of twenty-five (25) years. Renewal of naming right after the twenty-five year period will be reviewed and approved by the library Board of Trustees.~~

~~If a previously named facility or space within the facility must be replaced or substantially renovated during the twenty-five year period, the name will remain as set forth in any gift agreements related to the prior naming action.~~

~~If a previously named facility or property must be replaced or substantially renovated after the twenty-five year period, the library Board of Trustees will consider renewing the naming right either in a space similar or related to the original named area or in the creation of an alternative memorial, in order to preserve the history of commemoration.~~

~~If a named gift donor becomes embroiled in controversy that is inconsistent with library and Board of Trustees’ behavior policies and/or ethical standards, the Board of Trustees may vote to remove said name without notice to the donor and prior to the end of the original twenty-five (25) year term.~~

The Board reserves the right to revoke a naming decision if it constitutes a significant and continuing impairment to the Library's reputation or if the agreed-upon contributions are significantly reduced.

The Library will not relinquish to a donor any aspect of the Library's right to manage and control any of its assets, facilities, programs, services, staff, or volunteers.

Gift agreements related to naming actions will be kept by the Foundation.

Procedures

As a 501c3 non-profit, the Foundation is responsible for the planning and management of private fundraising drives in support of the library. If the Foundation wishes to offer naming opportunities as part of a capital campaign, the Foundation will work with the library director and building committee to identify signature areas for inclusion in the list. Giving levels associated with each naming opportunity will be recommended by the Foundation based on the campaign goal and number of gifts being requested at each giving level.

The library Board of Trustees will be asked to approve a list of naming opportunities associated with a campaign. Approval will enable the Foundation to offer listed naming opportunities to potential donors at agreed upon giving levels during the course of the campaign.

In general, donors will be recognized based on the agreed upon naming opportunity only after at least 75% of the pledge is fulfilled. Failure to fulfill a pledge in full will nullify the naming agreement. Gift recognition associated with individual campaign efforts will be subject to the campaign-specific gift acceptance policy.

Adopted: 08/2010

Revised: 2/4/2016, 11/7/2019, 12/1/2022, [10/3/2024](#)

Last review: 2013

**Westside Library Recognition
Opportunities 10.3.24**

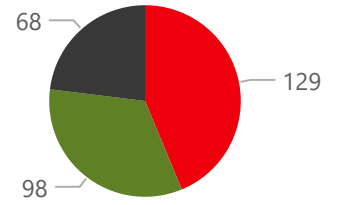
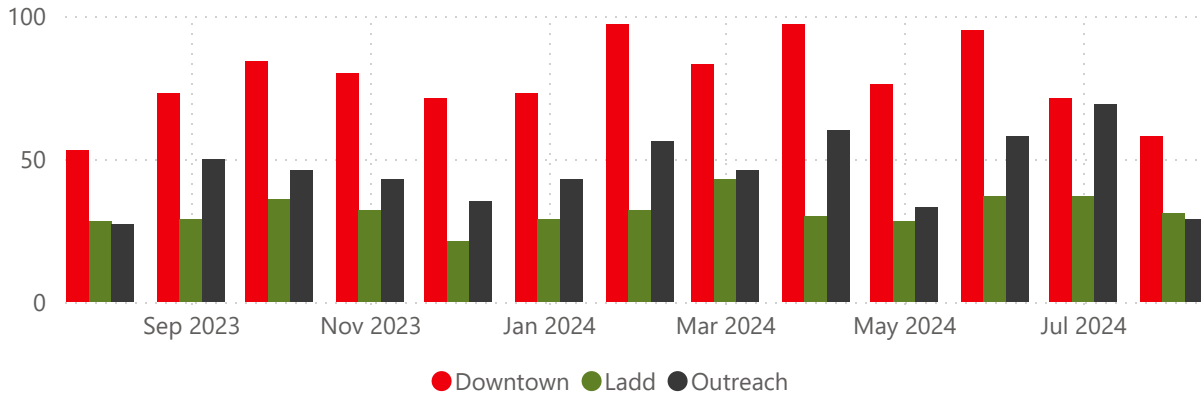
Adult Adjustable Changing Station
Adult Fiction Area
Adult Non-Fiction Area
Adult Staff Desk
Adult Print/Copy Station

Adult Public Computers

Adult Collection Area
Adult Outdoor Courtyard
Art Gallery
Bike Racks (2)
Book Return Window
Central Lobby Staff Desk (2)
Children's Collection
Children's Staff Desk
Children's Computer Area
Children's Outdoor Courtyard
Children's Program Room
Children's Library Area
Community Room Kitchenette
Community Room A/B or All
Collaborative City Park
Community Welcome Center
Courtyard Seating (4)
Drive-Up Window
Entrance Vestibule (East)
Entrance Vestibule (West)
Facility
Flagpole
Friends Book Nook
Holds Pick-Up Area
Large Conference Room
Mother's Room
Opportunity Center
Opportunity Center Offices (4)
Entrance Patios (2)
Reading Room
Self-Checks (3)
Wellness Room

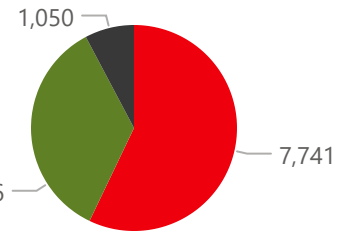
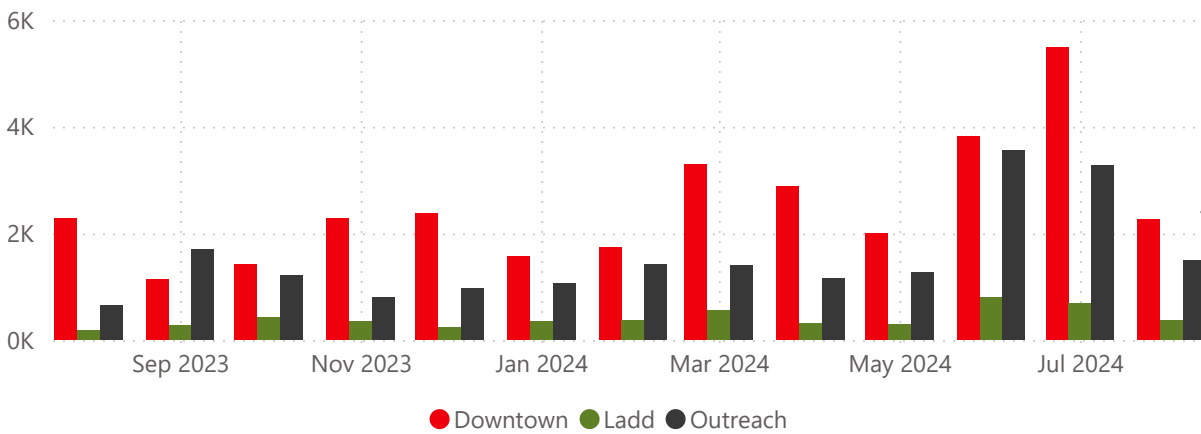
Sorter Room
Staff Breakroom
Staff Open Office
Staff Offices (2)
Staff Teaming Room
Small Study Rooms (4)
Large Study Rooms (7)
Young Adult Area
Young Adult Staff Desk

Programs



295

of Programs



13,557

of Attendees

Programming jumped into the new quarter, shifting from all of our summer fun right into fall! We began our third year of outreach to Johnson STEAM Academy and Cedar River Academy at Taylor Elementary, visiting all of the PreK-2nd grade classrooms every two weeks, and our 32nd year of Cargill Cares preschool outreach, providing free books and story times to more than 100 children every month. We celebrated Welcoming Week with Chalk Art, story times, and a Kenyan Beading program, held our 4th Plant Swap (always a big hit), welcomed more than 40 Bluey fans of all ages for a raucous and competitive Trivia Challenge, and restarted or continued a number of always popular programs including School Age STEAM, Dungeons and Dragons, many early learning opportunities, and much more. Participation in the Maker Spaces continues to grow, with five to 15 appointments every week, a very popular Teen 3D Print club, and many other events. The Opportunity Center continues to grow as well, welcoming a Kirkwood Work-Study student and two RIVA AmeriCorp members, allowing the Opportunity Center to expand capacity of who and how they can help.

We moved back to the CR area two summers years ago and our first engagement with the community was with the mobile tech lab & story time at Bever Park. I've always been a library patron & supporter and was so excited to see how the local library has continued to expand and adapt to meet community needs. The library was the first group to make us feel welcome and that welcome has continued each time we visit.

Aside from expressing my sincere thanks for everything you & the programming staff do (which could be a book in and of itself!), I also wanted to share this anecdote:

This past week, I overheard my girls (aged 4 and 6) discussing their current creative play of story time. "Well, my story time is more like John's..." "I want mine to be like Renee's, and my theme this week is..." "Jen has such fun parachute games!"

I'm so thankful my kiddos are not only on a first name basis with caring and kind adults, but also that these folks - along with the rest of the library staff - pour into our community in such creative ways. I always await the forthcoming OPEN+ magazine with anticipation! All this to say - thanks to you all for all that you do! - Martha McClurg, volunteer

Borrowing & Collections

42,834

Databases

37,030

Digital

91,008

Physical

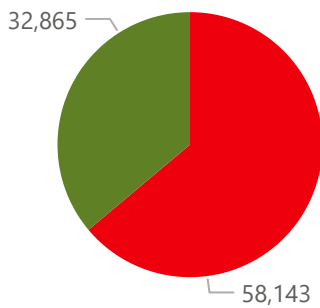
795

Technology

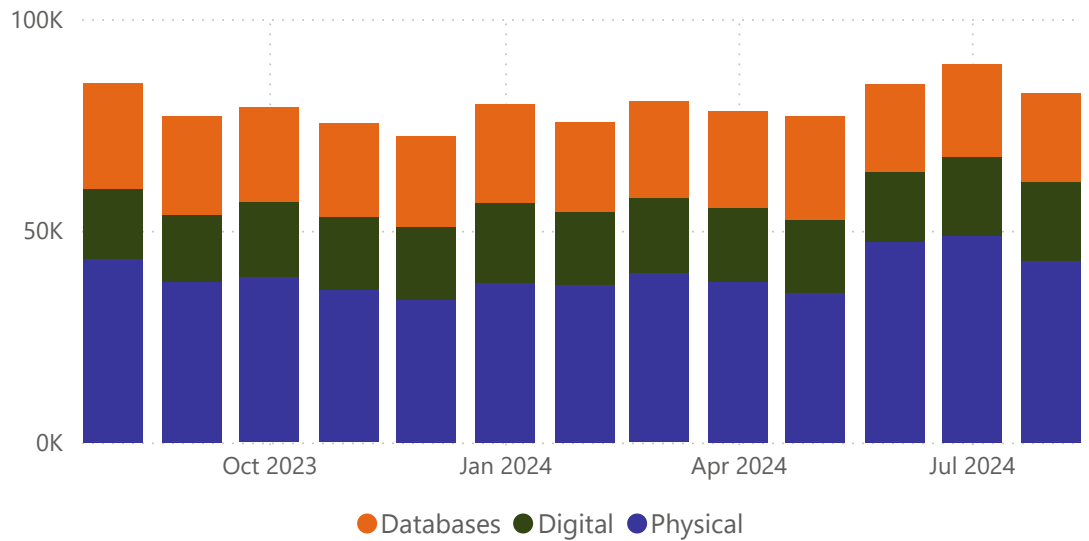
171,667

Total

Physical Circulation, by Location



● Downtown ● Ladd



The Materials Team is busy with fall book arrivals, this publishing season will stay busy through November and then slow down for the winter. Banned Books week is one of our favorite times to check the condition of our most popular challenged titles. These are often the most frequently replaced books because of the constant use they see. Replacements aren't always the exciting use of the budget but are crucial to continue offering a broad collection. Some of our titles needing very regular replacement are classics from Stephen King and Toni Morrison but our board books and readers for kids also need frequent attention. The quieter months are spent working on weeding worn books and purchasing replacements to prepare for another busy summer.

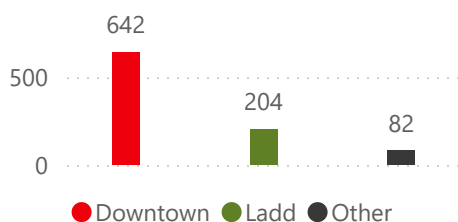
Patron checking her list for a title, "I really like the newsletter about books, it's new isn't it?" She proceeds to place two of the titles on hold.
- Nancy Geiger, Reference Librarian

Volunteers

928

Total Hours

Volunteer Hours

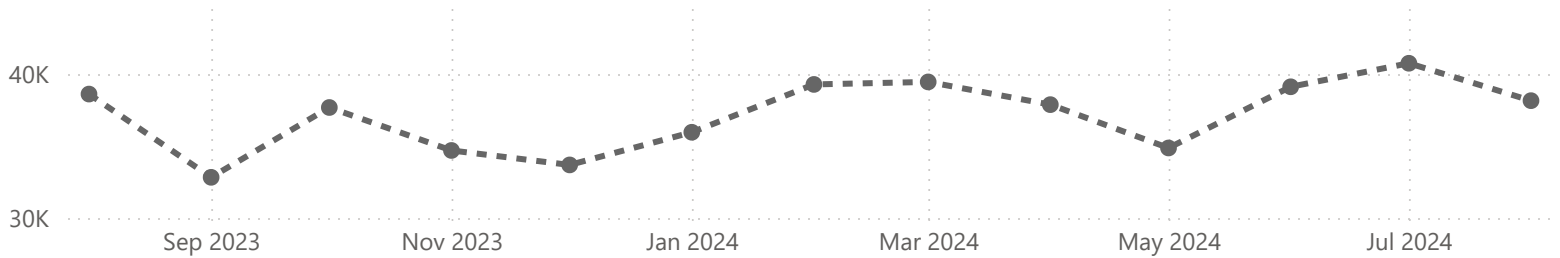
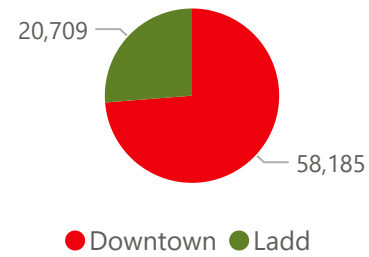


● Downtown ● Ladd ● Other

With the start of the school year, we are busy welcoming back our student volunteers. We have several work/study volunteers from Kirkwood and Coe College helping out with Closed Captioning or in the Opportunity Center. We also have groups of students from the Prairiewoods and Marion Transition Centers. These youth are further developing their job skills, gaining experience in working with the public, and learning how to be successful in a work environment as they transition from school to independent work. It is rewarding to see them grow and to hear how much they value being a part of the Library's team. Volunteer Hours in August: 465.

Visits

78,894
Physical Visits

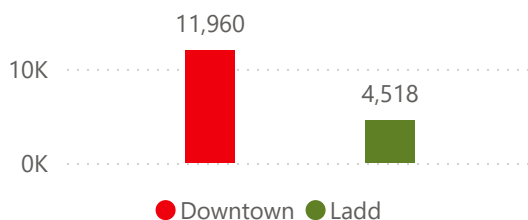


In October, Public Service Manager Todd Simonson will renew his Mandt Certification Trainer Credentials. As a reminder, Mandt is a de-escalation training program that the library implemented two years ago. This training focuses on understanding the impacts of trauma and crisis with individuals, the importance of remaining deescalated during interactions with individuals suffering trauma and/or crisis, and the accountability that we can control our actions and not others. It is important to focus on your personal response during heightened interactions. The plan would be to have staff recertify their Mandt training following Todd's trainer recertification. The training has made a tremendous, positive impact on maintaining a safe and welcoming space for all.

Two kids were working on the Long Dog Hunt in Childrens. They each had about half the sheet found and were both about to give up. Then one of the kids walked up to the other kid and asked if they could team up. Together, they found the rest of the Long Dogs with some mild hot and cold tips from staff ;) They decided to play together after their great hunt. When the one child was leaving, they asked the other when they would be back at the library so they could meet up and play. At this point, the moms got involved and were making plans to meet again soon....at the library! It was so sweet to watch. - Michele Prostine, Patron Services Specialist

Technology Access

PC Uses

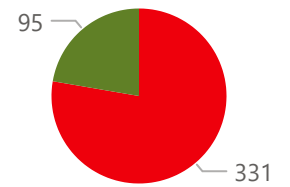
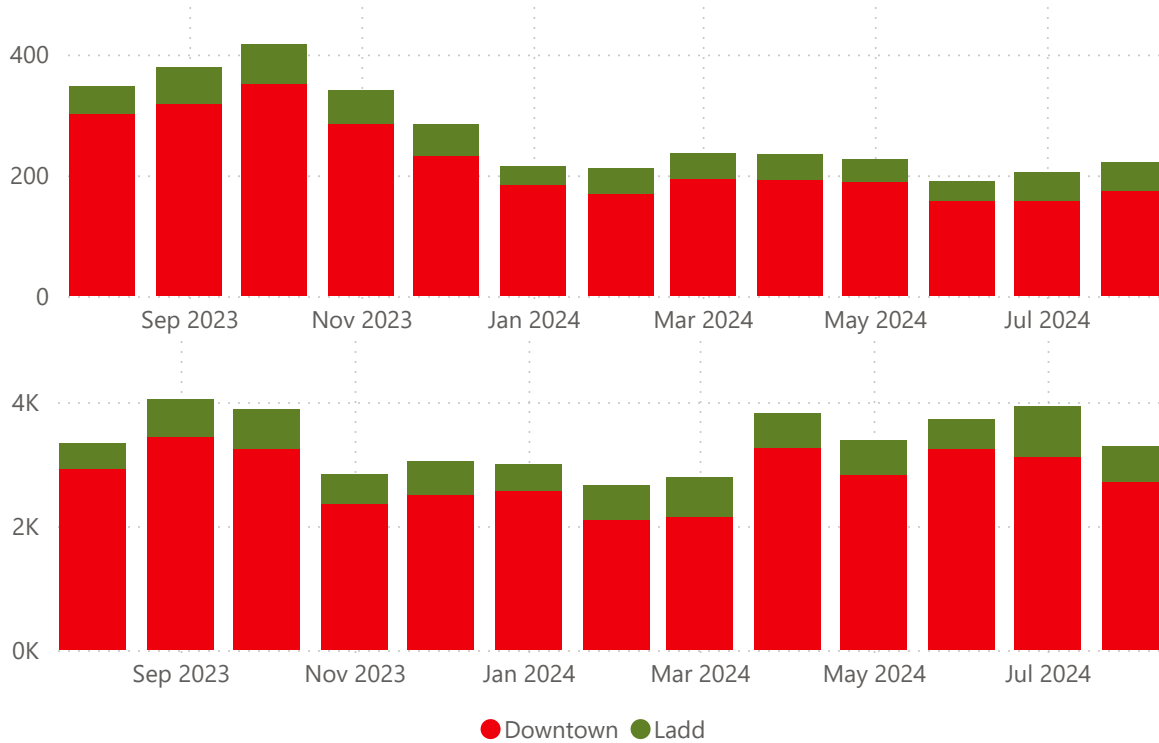


38,147
Virtual Visits

19,419
WiFi Sessions

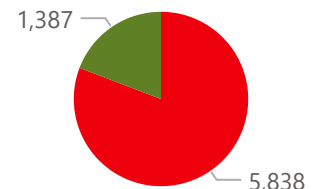
The Technology Solutions team has been working behind the scenes to replace battery backups and complete maintenance. The library will implement the Alertus system, which is the city alarm for an active shooter event. Our technology team configures each staff computer to be able to access the alarm and runs tests to make sure it's functioning currently. Staff have been receiving training over the last few weeks on using the system.

Meeting Room Use



426

of Reservations



7,225

of Users

● Downtown ● Ladd

We hosted approximately 3,188 patrons over 219 room reservations in August, an increase from the height of the summer programming months. We celebrated the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation’s 75th anniversary and welcomed back City View High School students with opening day orientations. There were also “backpack building” programs so that children in need of school supplies were ready for their first day of school.

There were also many community organizations and that gathered to write postcards, talk civil rights organizations, churches and interfaith groups, Scouts, men’s groups, women writers, and social groups gathering this month. There were sewing groups, book clubs and LEGO Clubs adding to the mix.

Community Relations is excited to share our Annual Report with the community. This project is one we think about throughout the year. We use the great stories our staff share with us throughout the year to help give a picture of the work happening at the library. While the data we share about our circulation, our visits, and our program attendance are critical information, these great stories go a long way to helping us communicate the impact the library has on our community.

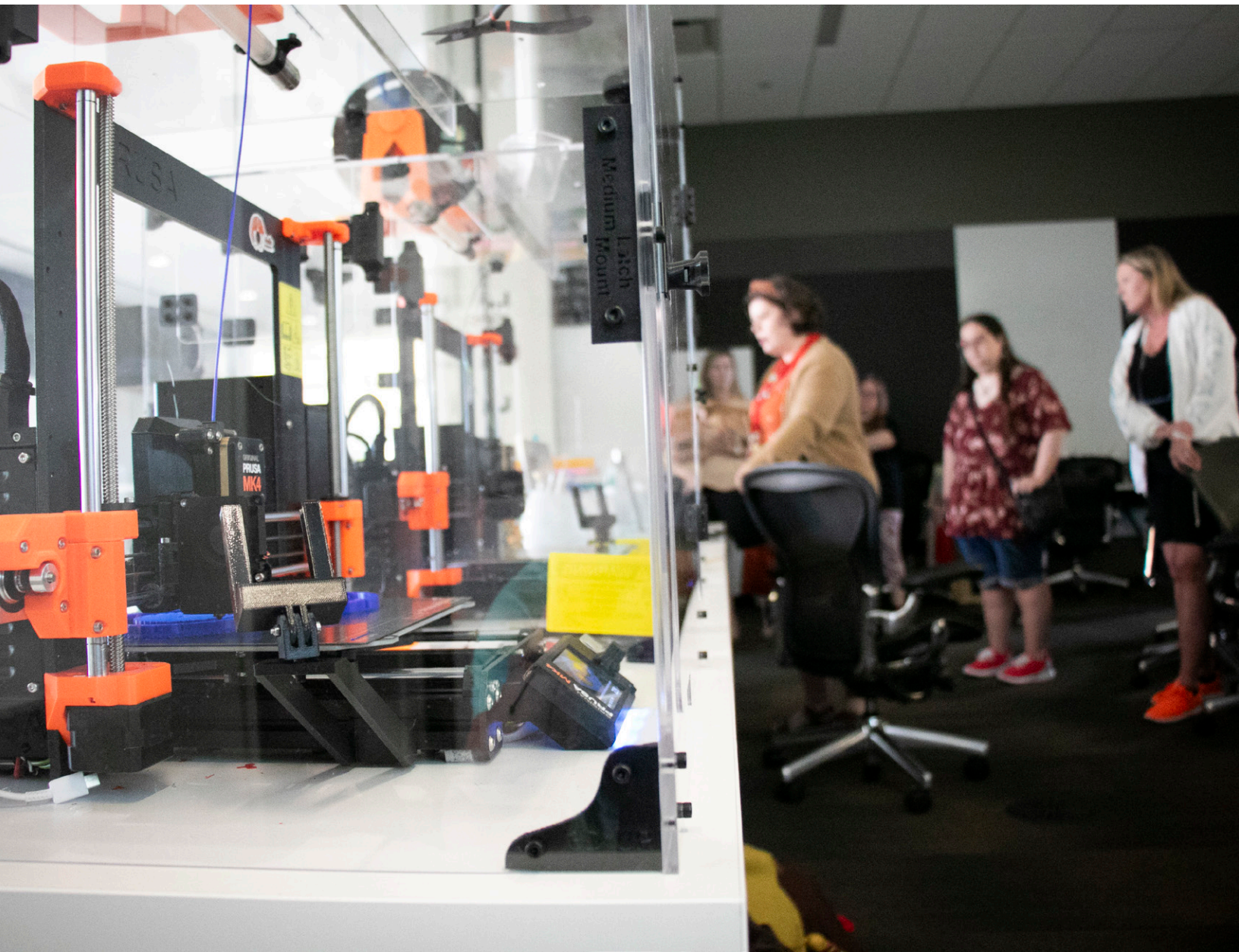
In addition to the Annual Report, we take part in Banned Books Week by celebrating the Freedom to Read. This year we set up timelines at both library locations and added it to our website. We also provided Freedom to Read bookmarks for patrons. We spread the word about our library yard signs, which are available at both locations. We prepare for election season by providing updated information about the voting process on our website, as well as creating special materials for patrons who are unhoused. This information is shared with patrons as well as our partners in the community who may assist those in need.

At a Coe College outreach event this week, a fellow attendee asked if we still had our Read to Dogs program. He was delighted to hear this was still going strong at Ladd. He reminisced about how much his son loved going to the library to read to the dogs and how it made reading more fun and accessible for him. These volunteers (both canine and human) have clearly made an impression on this family that has lasted years! - Jessica Link, Volunteer Supervisor

ANNUAL REPORT

fiscal year 2024





From the Director & Board President

Over the past several years, we have come to realize that the concept of a “normal” year is now a thing of the past.

However, FY2024 feels like the closest we have come to a return to routine since 2019. This year marks our first fiscal period without major disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic, the August 2020 derecho, or the July 2022 fire. This sense of stability is reflected in our data, signaling a new kind of normal for the Cedar Rapids Public Library.

Our circulation and visitor numbers have increased. Our dedicated staff has made tremendous efforts to welcome people back into our spaces and reconnect them with our services. We have ramped up our outreach initiatives and successfully revived many large-scale programs that were put on hold or reduced during the pandemic.

We have also found innovative ways to engage the community with books and library resources. For example, after reorganizing parts of the collection at the Downtown Library, circulation of those materials surged. We have seen continued growth in digital circulation and database usage, as well as increased use of our computers and meeting rooms.

None of this would be possible without our incredible library staff. Every day they assist patrons with job applications, notarize important documents, help families set up for celebrations, lead story time sessions, teach the use of 3D printers and other technology, and suggest what might become someone’s next favorite book. At the core of all these efforts, we remain committed to our strategic priorities: Literacy, Access, and Inclusion.

While we are pleased with these increases, they are not just numbers to us. They represent our ongoing mission to connect people to information, experiences, and services that enhance their quality of life, helping our community to learn, enjoy, and thrive.

So, we invite all Cedar Rapidians and members of our neighboring communities to come visit, explore, and experience the warm and welcoming spaces of the Cedar Rapids Public Library, where there is something for everyone.

Dara and Monica



Dara
Dara Schmidt
 Director
 Cedar Rapids Public Library



Monica
Monica Challenger
 President, Board of Trustees
 Cedar Rapids Public Library

Cedar Rapids Public Library Board of Trustees FY2024

Monica Challenger
 President
 Member of the Foundation Board

Jeremy Elges
 Vice President
 Member of the Foundation Board

Ana McClain
 Board Member

Chris Casey
 Board Member
 Finance Committee Chair

Elsabeth Hepworth
 Board Member
 Advocacy Committee Chair

Hassan Selim
 Board Member

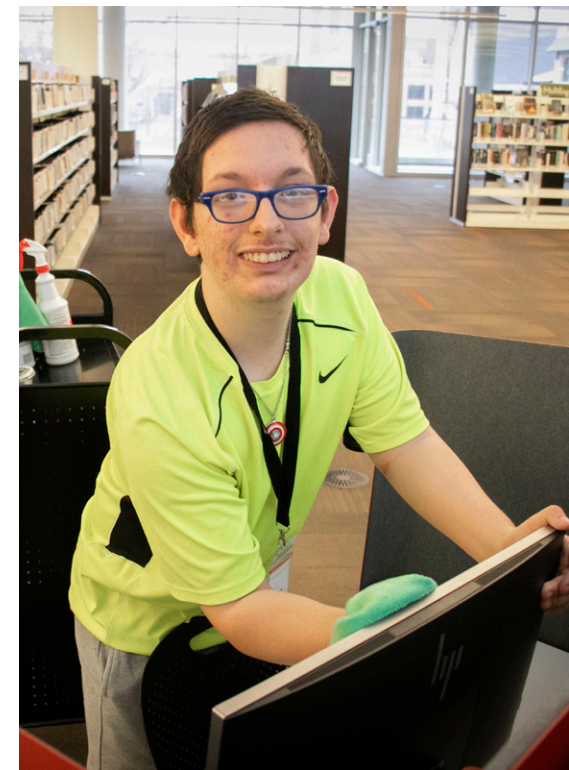
Jade Hart
 Board Member
 Building Committee Chair &
 Member of the Foundation Board

Rafael Jacobo
 Board Member

Susan McDermott
 Board Member
 Personnel & Policy Committee Chair

OUR MISSION

We connect people to information, experiences, and services that enhance their quality of life so our community can learn, enjoy, and thrive.



OUR VISION

We are a beacon of literacy to all who seek knowledge and understanding.

We are passionate navigators to the information, resources, and entertainment you seek.

We are your library.





It's Good to be Seen

When Programming Specialist Erin Campbell first started visiting residents at The Gardens of Cedar Rapids, a senior living community on Cedar Rapids' southwest side, one conversation in particular stuck with her.

"It's good to see you!" she told one man, who lives in the Memory Care unit at The Gardens.

"It's good to be seen," he replied.

That interaction is exactly why she wanted to start the two programs she brings to The Gardens each month. She visits Memory Care twice a month for a story time, and once a month she presents "Armchair Travels," which is open to anyone in the facility. She brings stories, photographs, and artifacts from a different county or destination each month for an interactive presentation.

"It's bringing a little bit of the world to people who are often forgotten," she said. "Maybe they can't get to the library. But they deserve to have library programming."

Campbell started her outreach efforts with Memory Care at The Gardens a year ago and added Armchair Travels about four months ago. She recently introduced a new element – a partnership with a local preschool and kindergarten class. She hopes to set up a pen pal relationship between the two generations. To get it started, participants at The Gardens created greeting cards to send to the children.

"Have a heart!" one card said, decorated with bright hearts. "Enjoy your day and do good at school," said another.

"This is from Grandma Bridget. Love you," another card said, the words surrounded by carefully selected stickers the woman making the card said represented her life: a house, a bicycle, flowers, a small dog.

As the residents decorated their cards, Campbell visited each table, asking the participants for their life advice, which would later be available for people to read at Ladd Library.

Campbell also read a picture book aloud, telling a story of a grandparent's relationship with his grandchildren. She said she carefully selects her books, hoping to evoke conversation and connection.

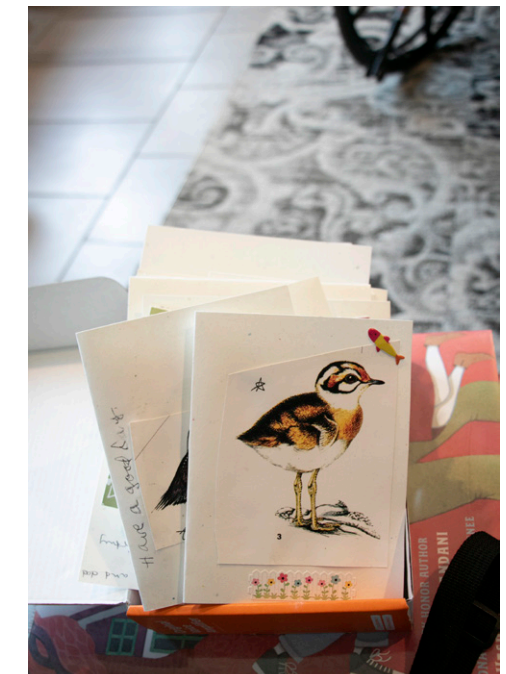
"We start talking after we read, and it can be a safe space to talk about difficult things," she said. "As we tell these stories, their stories can also be told. That's what books are for. That's what stories are for."

It is work like this that happens throughout the year, without much fanfare or praise, that has a lasting impact on the people involved: both the patrons and the staff. This is another example of how our library staff provide access to library resources to those who otherwise would go without.



"A patron had come in to fill out a job application, and I responded to the call for help. He let me know that he'd been out of work for a few years and really wanted to get this one job. We found the online application and filled it out. One week later, I was at the Computer Desk when the patron returned. He gave me a fist-bump and let me know that he got the job!"

– Rebecca Vernon, Reference Librarian





Westside Library Project

Work on the Westside Library project continued in FY2024, with the dream of a new library on the city's southwest side growing ever closer.

The new library will be off Edgewood Road SW and 20th Avenue SW, just behind the Aldi and within walking distance of the current Ladd Library. The Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation Department is also planning to build a city park adjacent to the Westside Library, creating a new library and park campus.



Where did we start, and where are we going? Here's the timeline so far:

2020: Nadine E. Sandberg left an estate gift of nearly \$2 million to the Library Foundation. This started conversations that led to the decision to invest these funds in a new Westside Library.

2021: The Library Board of Trustees engaged MSR Design to come up with initial design concepts. These concepts were presented to the Board in December 2021.

2022: The Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation began a feasibility study for a capital campaign.

- July: The Library Foundation Board purchased a 27-acre plot of land for the project.
- September: The Library Board selected OPN as the architect.
- October: The City of Cedar Rapids allocated \$6 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, and the Linn County Board of Supervisors allocated \$4 million in ARPA funds.

2023: Open houses were held in January and May to gather public input.

2024: In January, the Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation launched the "Inspiring Big Dreams" capital campaign, seeking to raise \$10 million for the project.

- March: OPN presented the design concepts to the public at an open house.
- July: The Foundation formally transferred the land for the project to the Library Board of Trustees. A second parcel of the property is being sold, which will also help fund the project.
- September: Garling Construction was selected as the general contractor for the build.

What's next? The official groundbreaking will be held on Oct. 18. The grand opening is anticipated in the fall of 2026.

"We're so excited to reach this milestone," Library Director Dara Schmidt said. "The Westside Library will be a community hub for one of the fastest growing parts of Cedar Rapids, and we can't wait to see this investment in our city's future come to fruition."

The Foundation's Inspiring Big Dreams capital campaign is ongoing.

"Our community has been incredibly generous in funding this campaign and making our big dreams possible," said Library Foundation Executive Director Charity Tyler. "We are excited to continue growing this dream as we break ground and begin to build."



"At Heart of Iowa this week, I was hosting an empty room at the end of the outreach session. A woman walked in, a new patient, and sat down and said, 'You are the famous Meredith, huh?' I laughed and she told me they have a Cannot and Can exercise that they do. One day, another patient stated their Cannot, but followed with, 'I know I can get help with that from the library with my friend, Meredith.' This individual said they were looking forward to meeting me since then.

"Knowing the library's time on site at Heart of Iowa has become a part of these women's lives that helps them feel like they 'Can their Cannots' was really powerful."

– Meredith Crawford, Community Engagement Librarian





Opportunities to Help the Community



When Curtis Grant was looking for a way to transition to a job that wouldn't require being on his feet all day, he came to the Opportunity Center at Ladd Library.

Working with Opportunity Center Program Coordinator Erin Maeder, he got his CDL license, updated his resume, practiced his interviewing skills, and applied for jobs.

Recently, he stopped back in to deliver the good news - he'd gotten a job as a school bus driver.

"I'm telling people all the time, if you ever need help, come to the westside, to the library, to the Opportunity Center. You know, the library, they really will help you," he said. "I mean, without the Opportunity Center, I wouldn't have my CDL. I wouldn't have made it. I give all the credit to the Opportunity Center. I tell people that all the time."

Maeder started at the library in May 2023 as the first full-time Program Coordinator for the Opportunity Center. In her first full year, she has made an immediate impact.

In FY2024, the Opportunity Center served 674 individuals through 192 workshops and programs. The Opportunity Center assisted with 458 job searches and applications and helped create 381 resumes. More than 69% of those served were currently unemployed.

The core focus of the Opportunity Center is to provide resources to the community to support employment and job training goals. Opened in Ladd Library in 2019, it is a collaboration between the library, Kirkwood Community College, United Way of East Central Iowa, HACAP, and the City of Cedar Rapids. Other partners include IowaWORKS, Goodwill of the Heartland, Catherine McAuley Center, DeltaV Code School, and Iowa Vocational Rehab.

"I'm telling people all the time, if you ever need help, come to the westside, to the library, to the Opportunity Center. You know, the library, they really will help you."

Maeder has added regular workshops and skill-building opportunities to the Opportunity Center's schedule, including Computer Skills, Interview Prep, Resume Building, and Financial Wellness. The Opportunity Center also provides space for other community organizations to host classes and meet with clients. Career fairs were relaunched in partnership with IowaWORKS in June and have had an average of 50 job seekers attend monthly.

Maeder, supported by other library staff, also does community outreach. The Opportunity Center provided weekly Financial Wellness education throughout the summer to youth at the Linn County Juvenile Detention Center. Staff also visited ASAC's Recovery Center program and the Larry A. Nelson Center and led a monthly group at ASAC's Heart of Iowa.

More growth is planned: a front desk volunteer began in April 2024, and a Kirkwood Work Study student started in August 2024.



"One Wednesday evening, I was setting up our displays. As I was working, I saw a patron walk up to the Disability Awareness Month display. I had just finished it and was working on the NCAA one. She was excited and announced to herself, 'Hey the library is celebrating Disability Awareness Month!'"

"She happily took a book off of it and went to the cafe. For the next hour, as I finished up the main floor displays, I heard her reading. After I was done, I glanced over and noticed she was reading to a young person in a wheelchair. Libraries truly are special places!"

- Kim Martens-Tyo, Materials Librarian



Two RIVA (Refugee & Immigrant Voices in Action) AmeriCorps members joined the team in the fall of 2024. They will promote the Opportunity Center's work readiness programs to the immigrant and refugee community in Cedar Rapids.

"Our core focus is to help individuals facing barriers to education and employment overcome those barriers and achieve economic stability through sustainable jobs," Maeder said.

Those barriers could be anything from language barriers to transportation to not having copies of documents required for work.

"When you think about barriers to employment, they can be anything. For some people it is finding childcare. For some it's that they are facing eviction or having trouble paying their utility bills. Some are experiencing homelessness," Maeder said. "How can you prioritize finding a job when you don't have a safe place to sleep? You have to prioritize stability for people when you're trying to help them find employment."



A Different Kind of Story Time

The lights are low at Sensory Story Time, and Programming Librarian Renee Greenlee speaks in a quiet voice as she reads books and leads the small group of children and caregivers who gather at the Downtown Library each Thursday in songs and activities.

This weekly story time, which Greenlee started in the fall of 2023, is designed to be less hectic and stimulating than the other story times the library holds, which can be crowded, noisy mornings attended by dozens of toddlers.

The quieter Sensory Story Time has made all the difference for children like Sawyer, a three-year-old who attends with his sister and grandparents. When he first started coming, he didn't speak to anyone, Greenlee said, but now he participates in activities alongside the other children.

"He's very shy. Renee has been so patient with him. She didn't push, she let him participate at his level, whatever he felt comfortable with," his grandmother, Becky, said. "The other story time was too big and too loud for him. He gets overwhelmed, so this is perfect."

The Sensory Story Time is just one way library staff work to increase access to early literacy activities. Along with public programs for young children at the library, staff do outreach throughout the year to area preschools and visit pre-K to second grade classrooms at Cedar River Academy at Taylor Elementary and Johnson STEAM Academy Magnet School.

In FY2024, that outreach included 173 visits to classrooms and 73 visits to preschools. Many of the preschool visits are sponsored by Cargill Cares via the Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation and include free books for children to take home once a month, along with enrichment activities for caregivers to do at home.

"We're providing literacy enrichment. We're not their classroom instructors teaching reading, but I see us as part of the puzzle of literacy in general. Kids can see reading modeled in a fun way. Once that's established, a solid foundation of a love of reading is formed," Greenlee said. "We are making that connection."

Greenlee said whether the staff are holding public programs in the library or going out into the community, they're always looking for ways to engage children in reading.

"It's also about access – even though some of the places we go aren't that far from the library, sometimes people still can't get here for a variety of reasons, whether that's transportation, work shifts, or other things," she said.

"We're not serving just one group. We want to serve as many people as we can, and everyone deserves to feel welcome at the library and feel this is a place for them."

"We're not serving just one group. We want to serve as many people as we can, and everyone deserves to feel welcome at the library and feel this is a place for them."



"A friend of mine is a social worker. They recently told me that a client was struggling, and when asked for their safety plan and safe spaces they can go, they shared that their safe space is Ladd Library. They love that they can be around other people but not be forced into having to carry on conversations. They can relax alone without being alone. What an honor to be a place people see as a safe spot to help them thrive."

– Jessica Link, Volunteer Supervisor





A New Take on Summer Reading

The library re-imagined the Summer Dare as the Summer Reading Challenge this year, and the results were a resounding success.

The change came after feedback from the community, from library staff, and from partners such as the Cedar Rapids Community School District, as well as information about declining literacy rates in the area.

When the Summer Dare was originally launched, the library was looking for ways to encourage people to engage in

experiential learning and connect with their community beyond a traditional reading challenge. Recently, however, an issue of significant concern has been supporting students who have continued to struggle after the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Results from the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress show that in 2023, about 64% of Cedar Rapids students were proficient in English language arts, well below the statewide average of 71%. For Black students, the number decreased to 42%.

Data shows summer reading can help prevent “summer slide,” the loss of knowledge and skills many students suffer over the long break between school years.

Data also shows teens who read frequently report less anxiety and depression than infrequent readers.

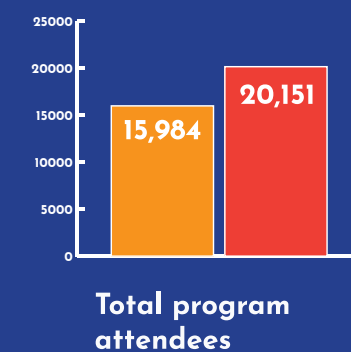
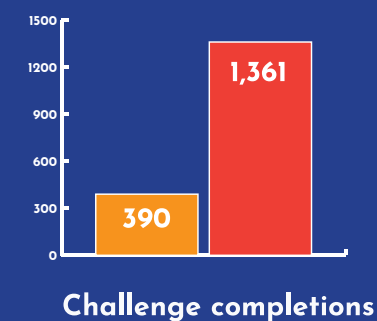
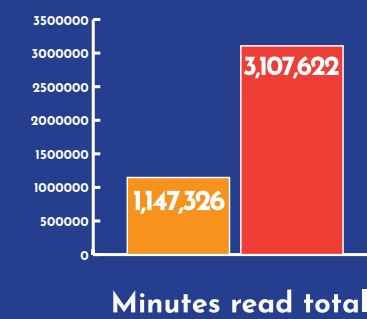
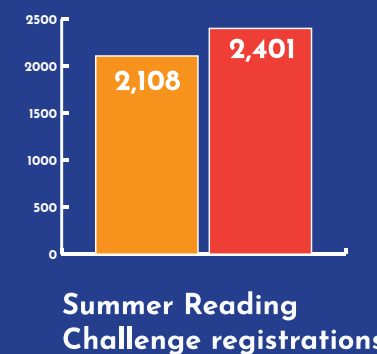
Knowing Cedar Rapids students need literacy support, library staff refocused the summer reading initiative, renaming it the Summer Reading Challenge. With the new branding, the challenge focused on reading instead of completing dares.

The Summer Reading Challenge is part of a new library initiative, Cedar Rapids Reads, which will encompass reading challenges and literacy efforts throughout the year.

“Just as Iowa City is the ‘City of Literature,’ we want to be a ‘City of Literacy.’” Library Director Dara Schmidt said when the program launched.

Along with refocusing solely on reading – participants read 600 minutes to complete the challenge – the program had paper logs alongside the option to participate digitally on Beanstack, which helped eliminate barriers to participation.

The results speak for themselves: significantly more community members registered and completed the program in 2024 than in 2023. All together, Cedar Rapids readers logged 3.1 million minutes in the challenge – compared to 1.1 million last year.



2023 2024



“A couple of weeks ago, a woman came into the library and came up to me to check out some books. She was so excited to be here, and her joy was absolutely contagious. She told me about how, growing up in a different country, she did not have access to a library and the ability to check out books very often. As she has gotten older, she says that she just wants to tell people out on the sidewalks about all of the books that we have, and they’re FREE! I really enjoyed our chat and her enthusiasm.”

– Cindy Ries, Patron Services Specialist





A Big Move

The books were on the move at the Downtown Library this year.

After 10 years in the building, a committee of library staff from different departments undertook a comprehensive review of where different collections were located.

They relied on data: looking at circulation numbers, material turnover and loss rates, and past versus present inventories. To make sure the moves would work logistically, they calculated the sizes of the different collections and measured the shelves. They also conducted a staff and volunteer survey. The committee met for about four months before making their recommendations.

"It was a lot of information gathering," said Materials Supervisor Jill Martinez.

Large print fiction moved from the second floor to the first floor, making it more accessible for those with mobility concerns, with science fiction moving to the second floor in its place.

Spark Kits, once shelved in various sections in the library, are now grouped together for better browsing. Multi-lingual books, in languages including Spanish, French, Swahili, and Chinese, are more prominently displayed so they are easier to find.

In the Children's room, children's chapter fiction, easy readers, and nonfiction have shifted to be easier to navigate.

"This is part of the strategic plan – it fits under inclusion," Martinez said. "We were looking at how to make the library more useful and accessible for everybody."

The actual work of moving the Downtown collection was a team effort, with volunteers and staff collaborating, including a big push during an All Staff day in November 2023. The library's shelvers took the lead on much of the work.

"The shelver team – they're wonderful. When they shift books, they do a lot of thinking and make it look great," Martinez said.

Martinez said some changes seemed obvious, while others took more careful consideration.

"Large print was what everyone knew needed to change," she said. "It was originally placed on the second story of the building because before the library opened, it was thought people would use the skywalk entrance more, but that didn't end up being the case."


Ten years after the library building opened was a good time to take a step back and assess what changes needed to be made, she said. In that time, some parts of the collection have grown, like graphic novels and comic books, while others have shrunk, like DVDs.

Since the move, results have been clear: circulation is up in the impacted collections, including notably in children's chapter fiction and large print. The data shows the efforts paid off.

"We said, 'We can do better,' even though it's going to be hard to do this," Martinez said. "This really allowed us to make some big changes. It was the right time to do it."



"We were looking at how to make the library more useful and accessible for everybody."



"I was at the Study Rooms Desk, and a patron, on her way out, said, 'Thank you for being here. I don't know what I'd do without this place and the services you have.' She said that recently something kicked in, and she realized she needed to start turning her life around. I said that we are happy that you are here and that we will always be here for you. It really touched me how appreciative she was, and the fact that she was on her way out of the building and still wanted to stop and share her gratitude with me."

– Melanie Schweiss, Patron Services Specialist

OUR LIBRARY **IN 2024** BY THE NUMBERS



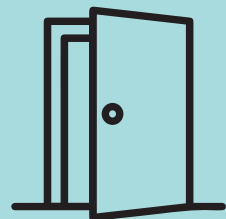
Website Users
182,753



Connections to Wifi
102,084



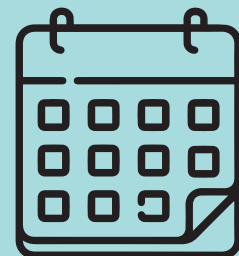
Public Computer Sessions
67,816



Visits
442,863



Meeting Room Users
39,585



Total Programs
1,874



Program Attendees
51,878



REVENUE*

Intergovernmental Grants \$384,580.
Other Revenue \$405,210
City of Cedar Rapids \$6,987,467

Expected Total Revenue \$7,777,257

EXPENSES*

Personnel Services \$5,732,868
Discretionary Expenses \$941,866
Other Expenses \$1,032,193
Capital Outlay \$70,330

Total Expenditures \$7,777,257

*General fund only



Database Uses
270,398



Physical Materials Circulated
472,736



In-House Circulation
22,012

Digital Materials Circulated
207,437

Total Circulation
972,583

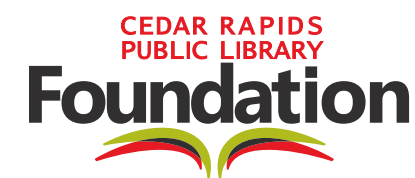
Volunteers
177

Volunteer Hours
5,045

Volunteer Value
\$104,953



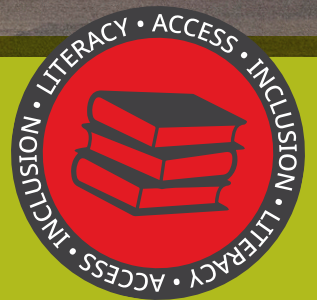
Our Supporting Organizations Make the Above and Beyond Possible





"A young child and their caregiver were walking into the library, and I overheard the child ask, 'What magical place is this?' to which the caregiver responded, 'This is the library!'"

- Callie Crandall, Acquisitions Clerk



Phone: (319) 261-7323 | website: CRLibrary.org | email: info@crlibrary.org

