



Seeking Excellence

Moving from Good to Great

2010 Annual Report

Mission Statement

Great River Regional Library (GRRL) develops, organizes and makes available to the public a useful collection of books and information resources.

GRRL provides:

- Free access to community focused services for a diverse population
- Assistance and guidance in utilizing those services and materials
- Lifelong learning opportunities

Leader's Message

For many Central Minnesotans 2010 was a difficult year.

It was clear from reading the local newspapers, listening to local television and radio broadcasts, or visiting local Internet news sites, that many organizations and businesses were being tested by the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. It was also clear many people – neighbors, friends, and family – were hurting. People were not only losing their livelihoods, but also their sense of hope.

As Father Time ushered in 2010, he told anyone listening that bold action was needed now. It was time to make difficult decisions and tough choices. GRRL staff, management and Board members heard that message loud and clear. The current economic reality required GRRL to look more closely at how to best manage public tax dollars.

One significant yet difficult decision was to move forward with the restructure plan to right-size the organization. In March 2010, the Board of Trustees approved a detailed staffing calculator allowing management to allocate resources where they were most needed and most effective. This was a milestone event in the history of GRRL.

In the summer of 2010, GRRL funders acknowledged the importance of libraries by keeping library funding stable. Their actions demonstrated that library services are vital community resources. Libraries have a huge role to play in helping people reclaim pride, prosperity and hope.

These two actions illustrate two situations where there were no easy fixes. Hard choices were required and hard choices were made! It is truly fortunate that many people acted courageously throughout this time. These decisions are allowing GRRL to now progress toward being a patron-centered, world-class organization even during times filled with turmoil and economic uncertainty. The great strides GRRL took in the last year are outlined in the coming pages. Please take a look and let us or any member of our wonderful staff know your thoughts!

Finally, we would be remiss if we didn't thank each of our staff members for their flexibility and creative problem solving skills. The changes have come at them very fast and have required a lot of adaptation. Still staff members have been incredibly positive while GRRL takes this journey to greatness. They are truly a strong and talented group of people. We appreciate them for all they do every day to serve our patrons and uphold the best of library professional beliefs and values.

Sincerely,

Louise Kuester and Kirsty Smith



Board President
Louise Kuester



Director
Kirsty Smith
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A Administration

Collection Development

Mic Golden
Regional Coordinator
Collection Development
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Manages all staff and processes associated with the budget planning, selection, acquisition, cataloging, processing, distribution, evaluation, repair and removal of all library materials - physical and electronic.

Communications & Fund Development

Julie Henne
Regional Coordinator
Communications & Fund Development
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julieh@grrl.lib.mn.us



Responsible for internal/external communications; raising awareness of GRRL services in the region with marketing and program publicity; ensuring positive reflection of GRRL through public relations; nurturing private partnerships via fund development activities.

Finance

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Regional Coordinator
Finance
(320) 650-2514
lindat@grrl.lib.mn.us



Supervises Finance Department. Provides regional support in areas of financial reporting, payroll processing, bill payment, purchasing, accounts receivable, banking and budget preparation. Controls cash flow and participates in annual audit of library financial records. Reviews trends, examines economic changes and assesses impact of these changes on library services.

Human Resources

Sunny Hesse
Regional Coordinator
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Responsible for ensuring efficient and effective staffing by providing training and safety programs; developing and maintaining personnel policies, procedures and performance management systems; and maintaining and administering salary and benefit programs. Serves as a resource to all staff for the purpose of maintaining an effective and efficient work team.

Information Technology

Jay Roos
Regional Coordinator
Information Technology
(320) 650-2534
jayr@grrl.lib.mn.us



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

Patron Services

Karen Pundsack
Regional Coordinator
Patron Services
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karenp@grrl.lib.mn.us



Oversees public services at all 32 libraries, supervises Patron Services Department, oversees GRRL programming, oversees patron billing and collection agency processes, and compiles regional statistics for public and state library and other reporting.

Highlights

Seeking Excellence, Moving from Good to Great

In 2010 Great River Regional Library (GRRL) was intent on empowering employees to see possibilities and create efficiencies in their work processes and routines. This shift in organizational culture began in 2009 and is intended to ensure that each individual staff member is providing patron service of the highest possible quality.

Management carefully examined and adjusted staffing practices and revised policies and procedures to enable staff to give their full effort to moving the organization forward. The reward for this effort is that despite a difficult economy, GRRL service and popularity increased measurably. By moving GRRL from good to great, staff members are creating the resilient and positive attitude necessary for the library to continue to be a loved and well used resource for all in times good and bad.

Distribution of Materials Improved

Thanks to changes introduced in 2010, delivery delays within the system and delays in patron service have been significantly reduced.

St. Cloud is the operational center for GRRL's distribution of library books and other materials. Each day, drivers load three cargo vans with books, CDs, DVDs, and other items packed into bags tagged for destination to the other 31 locations. Congestion in our distribution area meant a patron's request could remain buried "in transit" for days and items would be unavailable to the public.

The distribution staff at St. Cloud examined every aspect of the operation and made changes. By implementing technology, simplifying processes

and reducing footsteps, handling and paperwork, an item placed on hold Monday evening will be pulled off the shelf Tuesday morning, delivered to St. Cloud Tuesday night, and delivered to its destination Wednesday. The bottom line for patrons is that they receive prompt delivery of items they request.



All Staff Day

April 12, staff gathered at the St. Cloud Library for All Staff Day with the theme: "Together We Succeed!" Improving public service was the common purpose of the daylong series of workshops.

Census 2010

In April, GRRL partnered with Census 2010 to inform regional residents about the purpose of the census and how to provide the information requested. Eighteen GRRL locations provided questionnaire assistance centers staffed by a local census office or partner organization, and seven locations provided forms and information materials.

Volunteers

GRRL serves a population of more than 450,000 residents with over 140,000 registered borrowers. Meeting their needs requires the focused attention of professional and trained staff. Many GRRL locations benefit from the additional service of community volunteers who play a vital role by donating their time, talent and skills to support and enhance core library programs, services and outreach efforts throughout the GRRL system. The total volunteer effort from approximately 750 volunteers in 2010 was approximately 17,500 hours.

Building Highlights

New & Improved Facilities

Many patrons in Central Minnesota benefitted from facility upgrades in several GRRL locations in 2010.

Buffalo

The city of Buffalo invested \$480,000 into remodeling the Buffalo location to add a whimsical children's area, modernize fixtures and open up the entry. Teen materials were grouped together, new carpeting installed and the workroom reconfigured. December checkout of materials in Buffalo increased 12 percent in 2010.

Delano

The Delano location was originally built as a bank. In 2010 approximately 250 sq. ft. of valuable work space was added when it converted the drive-up section and bank teller's office into additional library space. December checkout of materials at the Delano location increased 6 percent in 2010.



St. Michael

The new, spacious St. Michael location opened Friday, Dec. 3. It is part of a city building that includes council chambers and a senior center, and enjoys easy access and parking. The new location has a children's area, teen area, study spaces, and access to multiple meeting and programming rooms of various sizes. Construction was aided by a Public Library Accessibility and Construction matching grant of \$400,000

from the state Department of Education State Library Services (SLS). An additional grant from the Wright-Hennepin Electrical Trust of \$1,720 was used to purchase children's tables and chairs. December checkout of materials at the St. Michael location increased 47 percent in 2010.

Staples

A Grand Opening of the new Staples location took place Thursday, Feb. 25. The new GRRL location is in a building shared with city offices close to downtown. A central council

chamber provides ample space for programming. A workroom and efficient shelving were also added. Construction was aided by a Public Library Accessibility and Construction matching grant of \$420,000 from the state Department of Education SLS. December checkout totals at the Staples location increased 18 percent in 2010.

Upsala

A Grand Opening of the new Upsala location took place Monday, Aug. 9. The library remained in the same building on Upsala's Main St., but moved across the hallway into an adjacent space. The new GRRL location is larger and has more room for programming. Daylight from a large window illuminates a pleasant reading area. December checkout of materials at the Upsala location increased nearly 19 percent in 2010.



Collection

The Library's Collection

All books, magazines, DVDs, CDs, audiobooks and other items owned by GRRL and available to library borrowers comprise the GRRL collection. At the beginning of 2010, the collection included 926,072 items. That grew to 955,483 items by the end of the year.

Collection Value

The value of GRRL's collection as defined by purchase price increased from \$16,310,742.06 at end of 2009 to \$16,961,717.59 at end of 2010. The library materials budget for the year used to purchase items for the collection was \$935,000.



The difference between the actual additional value of the collection (29,632 items with a value of \$650,975.53) and the increase suggested by the budget is caused by removal from the collection of old and damaged items. Staff withdrew 52,657 items in 2010, making space for fresh replacements, new bestsellers and current information.

Many would say the real value of the collection is its quality and breadth. GRRL has a diverse population with diverse library needs and interests. GRRL staff take great pride in responding to that interest with a variety of titles and formats and seeing happy faces across the checkout desk!

Promoting Collection

GRRL staff used the library's website to promote the collection more actively in 2010. GRRL purchases collection items to meet the information needs of all ages and community interests. Informing the public about this diversity and the variety of excellent resources the library has to offer is challenging.

A solution introduced in 2010 is the New, Best & Fun lists tab on the GRRL catalog page. This new tab opens a page of lists categorized under a variety of headings. Some lists are of new materials, some relate to current affairs, and some are just for fun. Numerous staff members collaborate on these lists to ensure library patrons find materials that engage, inform and entertain them.

Digital Library

To provide an improved downloadable audiobook service for patrons, GRRL contracted with a new vendor and opened a new Digital Library in 2010. Patrons now have access to eBooks and eAudiobooks through the OverDrive interface.

eBooks are available for children, young adults and adults. The focus in building the digital library has been to provide contemporary books appealing to readers. As more digital items are purchased, a growing library of eBooks and eAudiobooks will be available for patrons to download at home and enjoy at their leisure. By year's end, GRRL had purchased 1,397 titles in the digital collection; 1,215 patrons had checked out (downloaded) eBooks and/or eAudiobooks, and the checkout total was 4,582.

The service also provides access to more than 15,000 titles free of charge. Many are classics, such as the novels of Jane Austen, Edgar Rice Burroughs and Charles Dickens.



Technology

Internet Use Increases

Internet use across the region soared in 2010. After using GRRL's Internet stations 263,790 times in 2009, the public used them 371,556 times in 2010, an increase of 107,766 or 40.8 percent. For people who do not have computers or who live in communities where fast Internet home connections are unavailable, GRRL library locations provide invaluable online access. Providing access to computer services in libraries is an extension of the traditional role libraries play equalizing access to information and knowledge. Small and large GRRL locations experienced the surge. The largest numerical increase was at St. Cloud where usage went from 103,544 to 169,280; the largest percentage increase was in Staples where usage went from 3,319 to 9,692 (192 percent).

Wireless Use Increases

Use of GRRL's wireless Internet service also increased, from 38,789 in 2009 to 47,035 times in 2010, a daily average of 128.86 uses.

The Children's Page

GRRL added a new children's page to its website in 2010, linked from the home page as "Kids." The fun and educational page includes reading recommendations and a variety of links to other online sites suitable for young learners. It provides a direct link to the TumbleBook Library, featuring more than 200 animated talking picture books; it also offers French and Spanish language options. TumbleBook Library is part of GRRL's extensive database selection.



Databases

The Databases link on the GRRL home page connects to more than 60 specialized online information resources. They include a Britannica Online School edition; auto repair manuals from ChiltonLibrary.com; CAMIO: the catalog for online images of art from museums around the world; Minnesota Reflections, including more than 40,000 images and documents depicting the history of Minnesota; NoveList, a treasure trove of information for fiction lovers; and Heritage Quest Online, including census records and other genealogical records.

Computer Printer Coin Boxes

Computer printer coin boxes were installed at St. Cloud Public Library, and computer software is available for other GRRL locations to convert to coin operation. The coin boxes do several important things: they protect patron privacy, they save staff time, they prevent waste, and they ensure compliance with print reimbursement procedures. When a patron at a GRRL computer sends a document to print, it joins a queue of jobs at the printer. The patron then feeds payment into the printer and selects his or her job to print. This system prevents the wrong person taking a printout. It prevents people from printing multiple pages unnecessarily, and it ensures that patrons reimburse the library for printing costs.





Legacy and Programming

Programming & Legacy Funding

GRRL has brought an entirely new level of programming excellence to all of its branch locations through the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, commonly called the Legacy fund, a new (and limited) source of library revenue.

In the elections of 2008, Minnesotans voted to pay an additional three-eighths of one percent on taxable sales that would be used for environmental initiatives, to support parks and trails, and to preserve arts and cultural heritage. It was estimated that this tax revenue would provide approximately \$245 million for those activities in 2010. Of that, approximately \$48 million would be allocated to a new Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. Regional library systems, including GRRL, benefitted from that fund.

GRRL received its first funding allocation from the Legacy fund in July 2009. Payments totaling \$405,673.61 were made to GRRL for the state fiscal year July 2009 through June 2010. GRRL received a second allocation in July, 2010 of \$483,371.58, to be paid in installments. The money came with restrictions. Library Legacy funds could be used only for new programming, with allowances for administration, collection and marketing costs. It was not intended to support existing traditional library programming or facilitate cost shifting within library budgets.

Legacy Programs in 2010

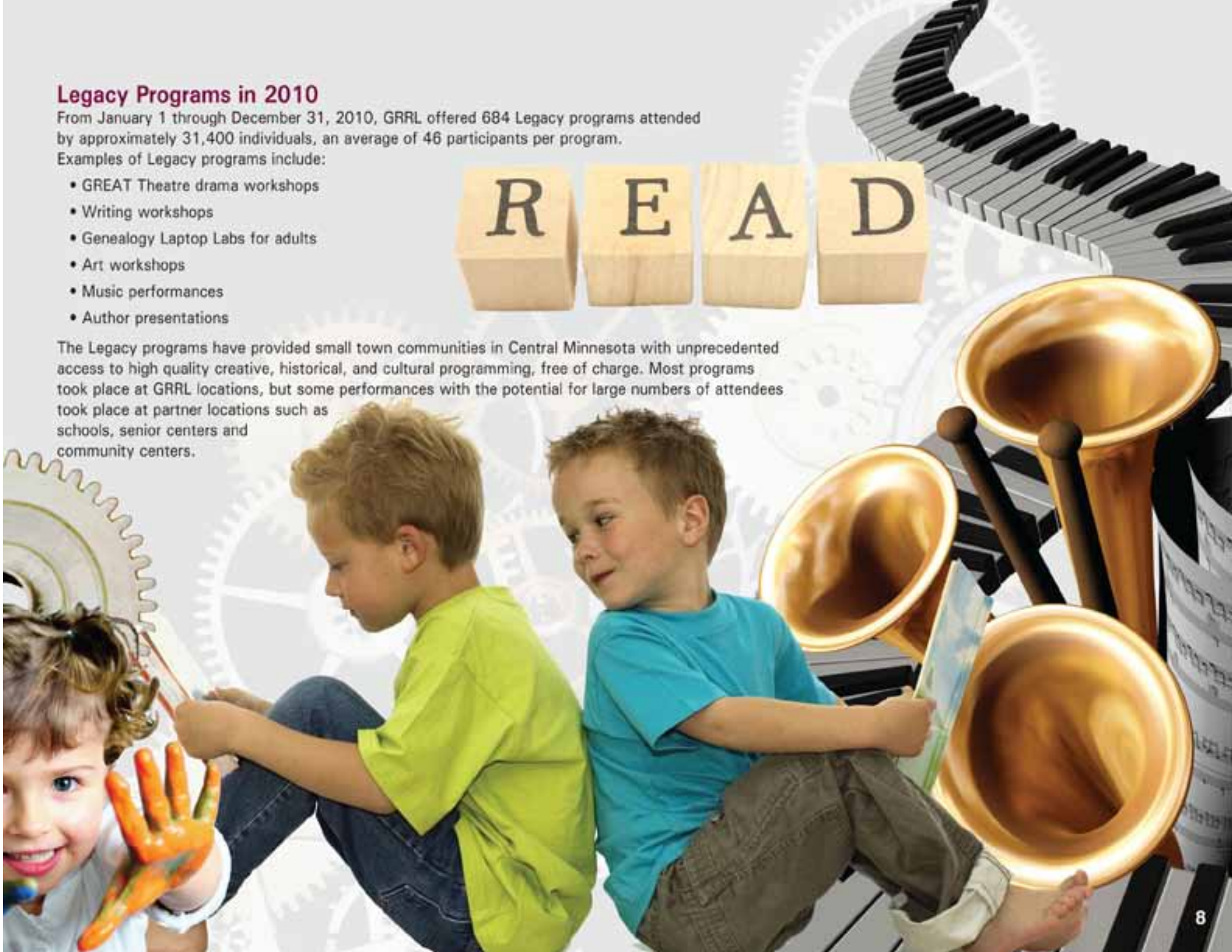
From January 1 through December 31, 2010, GRRL offered 684 Legacy programs attended by approximately 31,400 individuals, an average of 46 participants per program.

Examples of Legacy programs include:

- GREAT Theatre drama workshops
- Writing workshops
- Genealogy Laptop Labs for adults
- Art workshops
- Music performances
- Author presentations

The Legacy programs have provided small town communities in Central Minnesota with unprecedented access to high quality creative, historical, and cultural programming, free of charge. Most programs took place at GRRL locations, but some performances with the potential for large numbers of attendees took place at partner locations such as schools, senior centers and community centers.

R E A D



Statistical Summary

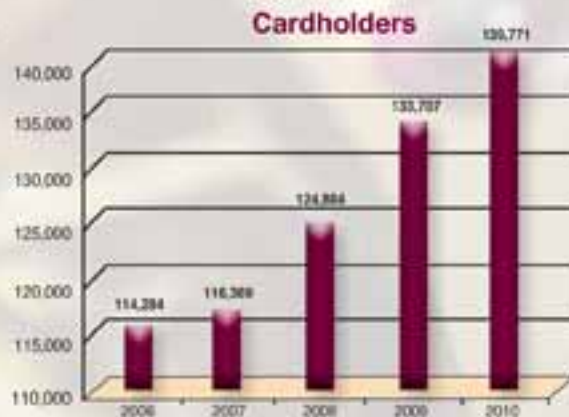
Circulation

GRRL circulation continued its upward climb, increasing from 4,098,201 in 2009 to 4,129,443 in 2010, an increase of 31,242. The greatest increase was in adult print, where an additional 68,252 items checked out. There were also increases in the numbers of requests placed, the number of holds filled, the number of renewals and the number of checkout sessions, which climbed from 714,670 to 727,096. Current estimates from the state demographer's office place the region's population at 454,208, providing per-capita checkouts of 9.1.



Total Registered Borrowers

The trend upward continued as the total registered borrowers reached 139,771, an increase of 6,064 over 2009. Stearns County continues to have the largest number of cardholders, showing an increase from 35,595 in 2007 to 50,097 in 2010.



Internet and Wireless Computer Use

Internet use across all branch libraries soared 45 percent from 263,790 Internet sessions in 2009 to 371,556 uses in 2010. Where additional computers have been provided the increases have been greatest. At Staples, usage jumped 192 percent, in Pierz, 83 percent. The higher unemployment and economic uncertainty of the last year has had an impact on library services, and none more so than library Internet use. Although we have no way of documenting how patrons use GRRL computers, there is little doubt that job seekers have been using library computers to find the positions that are posted online only.

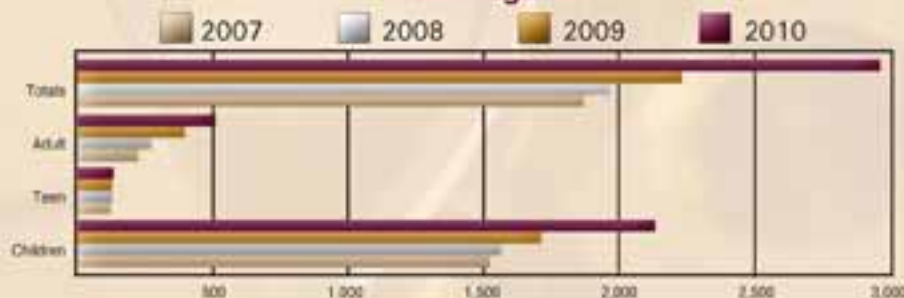
Wireless use increased from 38,789 to 47,035 connections in 2010, an average of 128.86 uses per day.



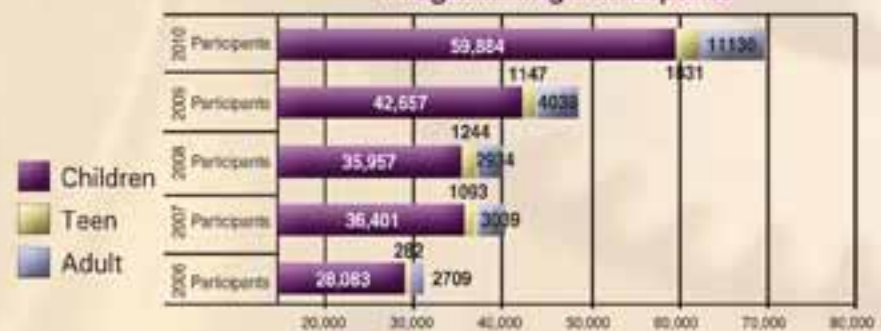
Programming

In 2010 GRRL enjoyed an unprecedented influx of programming opportunity because of Legacy funding. The State of Minnesota decreed that Legacy funding could not supplant traditional library programming. Traditional programming did continue for all age groups, particularly for young children, but increased attention turned to ways in which to take advantage of new opportunities. Legacy funds provided new kinds of programming such as theater workshops, enhanced existing programming types such as author presentations, and brought many people into branch libraries to enjoy activities previously not available locally. GRRL provided 2,239 programs attended by 59,884 children, 121 programs attended by 1,831 teens, and 505 programs attended by 7,730 adults. Total attendance at library programs was 69,445.

Total Programs



Programming Participants



Hold

In 2010, 1,095,434 holds were filled, up 15.7 percent from 946,528 in 2009. Hundreds of thousands of items are sent around GRRL locations thanks to the ability of library users to access the GRRL catalog via griver.org from home, browse, and click on "Request Any Copy." As more people have Internet access and gain familiarity with GRRL services, increased use is made of this service. At one time a browsing library patron would have been limited to what was available as he or she walked among the library shelves. That patron now has almost a million items to select from at the click of a button.

Checkout Sessions

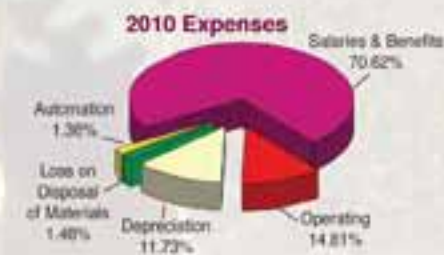
Staff completed 727,096 checkout sessions, an increase of 12,426, or 1.7 percent, over the 2009 total of 714,670. Checkout and circulation figures indicate 5.68 items per checkout session in 2010.

Collection Totals Holds Filled

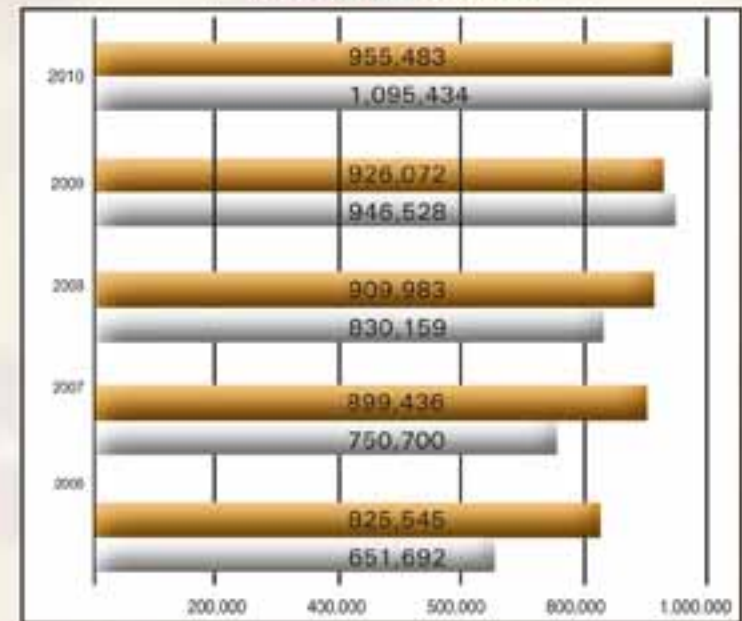
Financial Analysis

Revenues for the year ended December 31, 2010 increased 10.6 percent to \$9,713,250. Regional receipts remained the same. Federal and State Grants had the largest change with an increase of \$1,079,079 in 2010 (mainly Legacy funding). Interest income decreased \$31,859 or 49.67 percent.

Expenses for the year ended December 31, 2010 increased by 2.8 percent from \$8,944,887 to \$9,193,152. The major expense for GRRL remains salaries and benefits at 70.93 percent. This is a decrease of 5.31 percent in 2010.

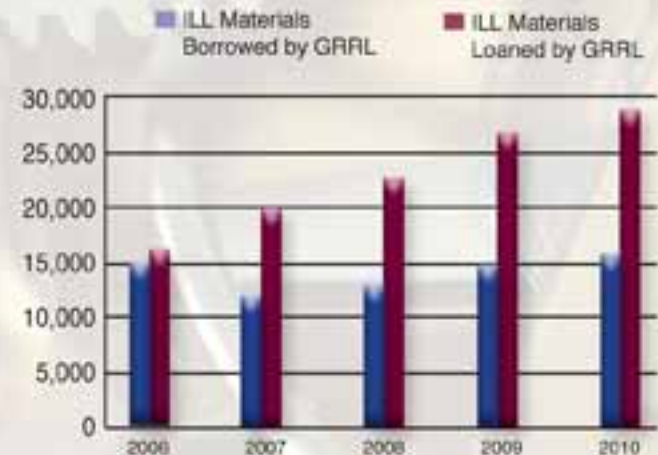


Hold & Collection



Interlibrary Loans

Interlibrary loan from GRRL to other libraries increased 7 percent to 28,152 items. Interlibrary borrowing by GRRL from other libraries increased 15 percent to 16,997. In all, 45,149 items were exchanged between GRRL and other libraries around the state and country.



Our Supporters

Special Thanks

Great River Regional Library (GRRL) seeks to build public and private partnerships that provide innovative learning opportunities for our 450,000+ citizens.

As expenses for core services

continue to grow, donor support is more significant than ever. Thanks to the generous commitment of our library supporters, GRRL can continue to meet Central Minnesota's learning needs. Donations allow GRRL to provide various services and an extensive collection free of charge to Central Minnesota. Private donor support has made possible the purchase of thousands of new books and other materials, computers for individuals with visual and hearing impairments, and prize incentives for the Summer Reading Program serving nearly 10,000 children and teens.

The Great River Regional Library wishes to extend sincere appreciation to the individuals, corporations, foundations and organizations listed here for their generous support throughout 2010. These donors have enriched lives and helped build stronger communities in Central Minnesota.

Thank you!

Donors listed on the following pages gave gifts in 2010 totaling \$25 or more.

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AAUW Afternoon Literature Group
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