

## 1000 Books Prepares Kids For School

When kindergartners begin school ready to read they have a step up on the ladder to success.

Great River Regional Library (GRRL) has implemented a new program to create reading readiness at its locations in Eagle Bend, Paynesville and Staples. It's called "1,000 Books Before Kindergarten."

The program encourages parents to read to their children by providing prize incentives for reaching targets along the way to the 1,000 books goal. The intent is to increase awareness of the importance of early literacy and encourage parents to embrace their role as their children's first teacher.

Each of the three GRRL locations is providing incentives funded by community support. Paynesville's program received \$850 from the Paynesville Lutheran Endowment Committee. Eagle Bend's program received an Operation Round Up grant for \$500 from Todd-Wadena Electric Cooperative and additional support from the Eagle Bend Area Friends of the Library. The Staples program is being funded through the Staples Motley Early Childhood Coalition, which together with Staples Motley Early Childhood Family Education, sought out a partnership with the library to introduce it in February 2010.

Within a year Staples had 82 participants. Two children have already reached the 1,000 books read goal.

## Programming Boost Brings People Into GRRL

More people are using Great River Regional Library (GRRL) than ever before.

One of the draws bringing people to GRRL is high quality programming paid for by Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, known as the Legacy fund. This funding has supported author talks, art classes, genealogy workshops, theater workshops and many other activities at all 32 GRRL locations since the first round of Legacy funding was received in July, 2009.

Continuation of Legacy funding was uncertain for 2011-13, and legacy planning had been slowed by the negotiations impasse that resulted in a state shutdown.

The good news is that Legacy funding and programming will continue, thanks to the active support of library advocates, many of whom contacted legislators to voice their opinion that Legacy programming should continue to be funded.

"I was told that library supporters were the second most vocal group (after outstate trail users) of supporters for Legacy funding," said GRRL Director Kirsty Smith. "We're grateful for that support and for the trust people place in us to use those funds wisely."

Minnesota's twelve regional library systems were granted \$3 million for each year to be distributed via an existing state formula. GRRL expects to receive approximately 11 percent, or \$330,000. That total will provide for presenters, publicity and some administrative costs associated with the program.



PHOTOS: Top: As mosaic artist Lisa Arnold (in pink dress) provides instruction, Cheri Boser and her daughter Maraya work on their mosaic project. Twenty-five people attended the Pierz Legacy program on creating mosaic art, including young children and retirees. Arnold, who quit a career teaching theatre and film when she fell in love with making mosaics, taught classes at 19 GRRL locations.

## New, Best & Fun Lists Make Your Searches Easy!

The best way to discover what Great River Regional Library (GRRL) has purchased recently is to check the New, Best & Fun (NBF) lists on the GRRL website under Library Catalog. It's easy and efficient, and gives you a quick way to find out about new books and DVDs that match your interests. Click on "New Best & Fun" in the red bar on top of the Catalog page and a selection of lists opens up for you to explore.

Staff create the lists to inform people about the high quality and variety of books, DVDs, CDs and other items the library purchases. Those materials are referred to as the library's "collection," and GRRL's terrific collection is purposefully built to meet the needs of Central Minnesota's diverse interests. So if you are looking for books similar to those of Jodi Picoult, there's a list for that. And if you're looking for beach reads, there's a list for that. Or if you want to know what foreign films the library purchased recently, there's a list for that, too. The lists are printable and updated frequently.

Staff tracked use of the NBF lists over 30 days in June and July. Here are the lists most frequently accessed.

List	Uses
DVDs	1347
Bestsellers Fiction	925
Music CDs	751
Fiction	383
Bestsellers Nonfiction	351
Teen Fiction	242
Nonfiction	240
Audiobooks	234
Staff Picks	209
Jodi Picoult	199
Beach Reads	189
Teen Summer Reading	173
Kids' Music/Movies/Audiobooks	145
Foreign Films	113

## Donors Help Keep Summer Reading Programs Fun

Thanks to all of the donors whose support has helped the library provide a fun and educational Summer Reading Program in 2011.

Reading success and participation in library summer reading programs are linked. Studies show that children who don't have books available to them in the summer tend to let their reading skills slide. They struggle to catch up when they return to school in the fall, with cumulative effects that can set them on a downward slide for life.

(Visit <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/summer/research.htm> for study information.) Children who enjoy reading and have access to books throughout the year are more likely to do well in life. GRRL's Summer Reading Program emphasizes the fun of participation to keep kids reading; the educational value is an added benefit.

The following individuals and organizations have provided support to the Summer Reading Program in 2011. Their donations have been used to purchase books, prizes and other materials that help ensure Great River Regional Library's Summer Reading Program remains popular with children and teens.

### Investing in the Future of Central Minnesota

#### Donors (\$250+) for the 2011 SRP

The Bernick Companies, St. Cloud  
 Buffalo Lions Club, Buffalo  
 Central MN Noon Optimist Club, Inc., Kimball  
 D.H. Blattner & Sons Inc., Avon  
 Electrolux Home Products North America, St. Cloud  
 Friends of the Library, Sauk Centre  
 Lions Club of Clearwater, Waite Park  
 Lions Club of Cokato, Cokato  
 Long Prairie Packing Company, LLC, Long Prairie  
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St. Cloud Lions Club  
 St. Cloud Morning Optimist Club, St. Cloud

#### In-kind Contributions:

Hardee's of Cold Spring  
 Jimmy's Pizza, Cold Spring  
 LarsonAllen, LLP, Waite Park  
 Marnanteli's Pizza, Cold Spring  
 Rengel Printing Company, St. Cloud

## Donor Wall Installed at St. Cloud Public Library

Artist Mary Bergs was at the St. Cloud Public Library in May 2011, to supervise installation of a donor recognition wall. The artwork was commissioned by the City of St. Cloud to recognize donors to the St. Cloud capital campaign. The campaign helped purchase new books and provide technology in the library when it opened in 2008. At a

preliminary visit, Bergs gathered opinions about the building from library patrons. Quotations from those opinions have been interspersed with the donor names on an opaque base layer. It is covered with a glass panel on which is the word READ. The letters are transparent so the donor names remain legible.



# Library Survey Shows People Love Their Libraries

There never was much doubt that people love their libraries. Now you've told us so.

In 2011, staff surveyed people who use the Great River Regional Library (GRRL) at all 32 of its locations. Completion of a customer satisfaction survey is required by the library's 2010-2012 Strategic Plan, with the intent that it be used as a baseline so trends can be measured over time.

Demographic information was gathered, as well as information about the services patrons use, their level of satisfaction, and their comments.

- More than 97 percent rated library staff mostly pleasant, knowledgeable and helpful.
- More than 92 percent said GRRL's collection is mostly meeting their needs.
- More than 98 percent of the 77 percent of users who visit the GRRL website say it is fulfilling their needs.
- The overall satisfaction rating was 80 percent excellent, 18 percent very good, with the remaining 2 percent divided between good and fair.

The service most often selected as "the most important reason"\* to visit the library was:

- 1: Check out of books and magazines (93 percent)
- 2: Check out of video resources (58 percent)
3. Check out of audiobooks and music CDs (42 percent) and
4. Use of library computers (19 percent)

Participation in the survey was fairly balanced by age, with 68 percent of respondents being in life's middle years from 26 to 65. Thirteen percent were older and the rest younger. Almost three-quarters of respondents, 74 percent, were female.

The survey results are reassuring, said Karen Pundsack, GRRL's patron services coordinator. "The results reinforce our confidence in the efforts of the system and its staff. We place an emphasis on customer service, and it's good to see that emphasis pay off in customer satisfaction."

\* Many respondents did not check "the most important reason" but instead checked several important reasons.

## Why Do You Love Your Library?

*"Because we can get books, movies, books on tape, music anytime. We can order through the system when we hear about a new book. We can research things without having to buy them first. We're so glad you are here. My kids loved coming here every week when they were little and loved participating in the summer reading program. Books and getting new books to read at home were so exciting to them and still are!"*

Long Prairie patron comment from customer satisfaction survey.



## 2011 LIBRARY DONATION

Support library services with a gift to Great River Regional Library. Visit [griver.org/support-library](http://griver.org/support-library) to make an online donation.

Office use only:

Pstm. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Amt. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ck # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Init. \_\_\_\_\_

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

My/our donation, payable to GRRL:  \$250  \$100  \$50  \$25  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please include name in donor recognition as above.  This gift is anonymous.

This gift is: In Memory of : \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Send an acknowledgement letter of this tribute gift to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Japan's Comic Culture Captivates Kimball Pair



Siblings Harlan and Moriah Nohava have developed a passion for Japanese graphic novels, called *manga*.

Siblings Harlan and Moriah Nohava estimate they have read 1,000 *manga*, or Japanese illustrated books, with a value of approximately \$10,000, all checked out from Great River Regional Library (GRRL) over the last three years.

The siblings are GRRL super-users. They visit Kimball, Annandale and St. Cloud locations, and attend Anime Club meetings in St. Cloud Public Library. Home-schooled, they've also used GRRL to access informational books over the years.

According to Angela Nohava, their mother, Harlan and Moriah had library cards as soon as they could write their names and soon became voracious readers. (It's in their blood. They had three great aunts who were librarians.) Now 22 and 13 respectively, Moriah and Harlan are able to enjoy the same books. Most of the time, they read manga.

"I like the art, and the stories are enjoyable," Moriah said. "The Japanese culture comes through, and their habits, and the books often have cultural notes in the back." In manga, the back is often at the front, as some American versions are published like the Japanese originals, reading from right to left and back to front.

Popular manga themes include romance, sports, science fiction (particularly robot wars), horror, school and daily life. The illustration style was influenced by American comics after WWII, but has become distinct from Western art and is recognizable by its big haired, big eyed teenage characters.

For young children who want to begin reading manga, the siblings recommend "Pokemon" and "Yotsuba&i." Older (teen) readers might enjoy "Bleach," "Fullmetal Alchemist," or "Full Metal Panic!" Harlan is currently reading "Full Metal Panic! Overload!" Moriah is reading "O-Parts Hunter."

## Summer Hours Switch Helps Albany Patrons

The Great River Regional Library in Albany has operated with special hours this summer to give users greater opportunities to enjoy library services at a busy time of year.

Albany staff recognized that many children and cabin owners increase their use of library services during the summer. In response, the library reduced its open hours by one hour a week for the school year to be open additional hours in the summer at no extra cost. The new hours (in operation May 31 through Sept. 3) provided an extra hour Monday and Wednesday evenings, and two additional hours Thursday morning:

Monday 12-8	Thursday 10-6
Tuesday 12-8	Friday 12-5
Wednesday 10-6	Saturday 10-1

If the open hours adjustment proves worthwhile, similar shifts may be considered elsewhere.

## Save a Tree: Get Your Currents By Email

This Currents newsletter is available for those members requesting it via email. To reduce costs, save trees and, of course, protect our environment we encourage as many advocates as possible to consider taking full advantage of this by switching to the electronic .pdf version. Please contact Julie Henne at [currents@grrl.lib.mn.us](mailto:currents@grrl.lib.mn.us) if you would like to receive the newsletter by email or have any questions or comments. As always, the newsletter is produced just for our library advocates. We thank you warmly for your support, and if you have any suggestions about content we would love to hear from you.



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