

High \$5 is a Success

The March High \$5 campaign raised \$15,271.80, a substantial increase over the previous year's \$14,491.50. Each library location keeps 40 percent of revenue for local purposes (to a maximum of \$750) and 60 percent is used by Great River Regional Library in ways to benefit library system users generally.

Two libraries received the \$750 maximum for local use: Delano Public Library, which raised a total of \$1,965.20, and St. Cloud Public Library, which raised a total of \$2,450.30.

"I'll use Delano's local share to support programming and also to buy some new DVDs," said Delano Branch Manager Carol Plocher.

Buffalo Public Library and the Waite Park Public Library also raised more than \$1,000.

From young children to great-grandparents, High \$5 makes it possible for all library supporters to show their support for the library. This year's generous response from 1,056 individuals makes it the library fundraising campaign that receives the highest number of donations. The average donation was \$14.56.

New "Read Down Your Fines" Week Gives Kids Opportunity to Wipe Slate Clean

Great River Regional Library (GRRL) gave children and teens an incentive to read at the library this summer by hosting the first ever Read Down Your Fines week, June 24-29. This new initiative eliminates the financial roadblock caused by fines and encourages young people to read themselves back into good standing with their local library.

Young people throughout the region were grateful and enthusiastic about this opportunity. St. Cloud, the largest branch in the system, had 21 participants, and others had similar totals, including 20 at Pierz and 17 at Long Prairie.

Read Down Your Fines applied only to charges levied against 'minor' cards given to those 16 and younger, and forgiveness only applied to late return fines, not to charges for lost or damaged items. This means the items concerned have been returned and are again available for use by other people.

Not all fines that accumulate on minor cards are caused by irresponsible behavior. Minors sometimes accumulate fines on their cards because they don't have transportation, or because somebody else within their family uses their card and returns items late. Even when children or teens have been careless, giving them the opportunity to read down their fines is worthwhile because it brings them back to the library. Reading is inherently good for kids; when they feel welcome at the library they are more likely to use its services and, therefore, read. Reading helps counteract the dreaded summer slump!

The program worked this way. Holders of minor cards were given a pass for the week of June 24-29, library staff marked their pass for the amount of time they spent reading at the library, and for each 15 minutes of reading, \$1 in fines was waived. In the case of very young children with fines on their cards, parents were able to read down the children's fines by reading to them in the library.

Forgiving fines does have a cost. To keep this effort revenue neutral, the library conducted a special fundraising campaign. Through mail and online solicitation, the library raised more than \$7,000 in donations toward Read Down Your Fines. To discuss sponsorship opportunities for future Read Down initiatives, please contact Julie Henne, Communications and Fund Development Coordinator, at 320-650-2532.



Pronunciator Options Grow

When Great River Regional Library added the Pronunciator database little more than a year ago, more than 2 million language lessons in 60 languages were made available free of charge to cardholders.

That great deal just got greater! Pronunciator now offers 75 languages for budding linguists to learn. It provides instruction in 50 languages. In addition to major world languages, it has now added more minor languages including Basque, Lao, and Welsh.

Within each language, Pronunciator offers up to 10,000 phrases, 354 hours of audio lessons, eight types of interactive drills, and six types of scored quizzes.

If you're planning a trip abroad and want to learn a few basic phrases, begin with Pronunciator. You'll find it on the "Databases" link on the library website.

Publishers Limit eBook Choices

After withdrawing its content in 2011, major book publisher Penguin began offering eBooks to libraries in 2013, but not on OverDrive, the most common library platform. Also, Penguin was offering a one-year license only.

Most publishers have not given libraries the same access to e-materials that they have in ink and paper. Prices are high, and terms are difficult.

Because of this, Great River Regional Library's Digital Library has not grown content as quickly as was hoped, even though the service is popular.

As of June 1, 1,172 eBooks and 208 eAudiobooks had been added in 2013 for a total of 7,485 purchased copies in the collection. Total Digital Library checkouts were 39,922, far ahead of the pace set in 2012.

Library Shifts Focus of Tax Season Service

If you're a last-minute filer who has relied on the library to provide tax forms, you'd better allow more time in 2014.

Beginning next year, library staff will provide assistance in locating the IRS and MN Department of Revenue sites online, and taxpayers will be able to use library computers to print forms they need, but preprinted income tax forms will not be available.

Great River Regional Library has made tax forms available at each of its 32 locations for many years. The decision to discontinue providing preprinted forms was made based on the increasingly late release of printed forms from both the federal and state level. Both the Internal Revenue Service and Minnesota Department of Revenue have been moving toward electronic tax filing, and the library can no longer offer adequate services to patrons by providing the paper forms.

"The IRS has done a poor job of getting all of its information and all of the forms available in a timely manner," said Karen Pundsack, the library's patron services coordinator. Because of changing tax laws in the past two years, the IRS has had to delay printing and distributing forms. People become frustrated when they make multiple trips to the library hoping to pick up their tax forms only to learn the forms are not yet available.

After post offices and most banks discontinued the service, libraries became the main location where individuals who continued to use paper forms could obtain them. Unfortunately, this hasn't worked well for GRRL or for taxpayers. GRRL strives to provide excellent customer service to all patrons, but has been unable to achieve this due to the limited availability of the information.

Library staff will continue to provide assistance in locating the Internal Revenue Service and Minnesota Department of Revenue sites online. Each GRRL location has Internet stations and printers available to the public. Taxpayers will be able to use library computers to print forms they need for 10 cents per page. Library staff also can assist in locating helpful resources, such as tax preparation assistance sites for seniors.

TAXES

Staff Join Volunteers on World Book Night

On April 23, 2013, thousands of volunteers gave away half a million free books in more than 6,000 towns and cities across the United States.

The free book giveaway was part of World Book Night U.S. (WBN), an ambitious campaign to give thousands of free, specially printed paperbacks across America on one night. Great River Regional Library recruited more than 50 volunteers to share books at different locations across Central Minnesota such as parks, coffee shops and fitness centers.

Each volunteer received 20 copies of one book to give away. WBN organizers provided a choice of 30 titles to satisfy a variety of interests. The hope was that book recipients within a community would share their reactions and become more involved in books and reading. Providing people with materials and services to support lifelong learning and personal enrichment is a goal within the library's strategic plan.

WBN is also celebrated April 23 in Germany, the U.K. and Ireland. April 23 is the date of the UNESCO International Day of the Book, the birthday of William Shakespeare, and the date that both Shakespeare and Miguel de Cervantes (author of "Don Quixote") died.

Bestselling author James Patterson is an honorary chair-person for WBN. Patterson said: "In my experience, when people like what they are doing, they do more of it. This is the genius of World Book Night — it gets people reading by connecting them with amazing, enjoyable books. I'm honored to be a part of it."

Photos: Volunteers Mary Ackerman at Cokato (top, right) and Jeanie Pilarski at Delano (bottom, right) gave away books in their communities on World Book Night.



2013 Summer Reading Program Digs Into Reading

The 2013 Summer Reading dates are June 10 to Aug. 10.

For children ages 0 to sixth grade the program theme is "Dig Into Reading." For teens in sixth through 12th grade the program theme is "Beneath the Surface." Staff selected themes to take advantage of popular plotlines in young adult literature, movies and television. From archaeology to dinosaurs to zombies, there's no shortage of fun ways to interpret the themes and no shortage of books to read.



To get toddlers into the reading habit, parents can sign up their baby/toddler ages 0 to 3 to receive a Read-to-me reading record. The completed record can be turned in later for a chance of winning a Read-to-me prize. Older children and teens are also eligible for prizes. After registering they can complete and turn in as many reading coupons as they want for prize drawings at

their local library. For the Dig Into Reading program, each library will have its own prizes selected from a list that includes a fossils beginner science kit, a pirate dig kit, and a variety of cute hand puppets. For the teen Beneath The Surface program each library will have a Barnes & Noble gift card and additional smaller prizes. All prizes are provided by the St. Cloud Friends of the Library.

Research Supports Need for Summer Library Programs

Numerous studies have shown that reading over the summer prevents "summer reading loss." Summer reading loss is cumulative and children don't "catch up" in fall because the other children are moving ahead with their skills. By the end of sixth grade, children who lose reading skills over the summer may be two years behind their classmates.

Benefits of Summer Reading Programs

- Reading just four or five books over the summer can have a significant impact for young readers
- Summer reading programs are not located in school buildings, which helps change a negative perception about summer learning for those students who don't enjoy school
- Summer reading programs in public libraries encourage readers to explore alternate formats such as magazines, recorded books, graphic novels, and materials on the Internet



Enjoy Summer With Legacy Fun

Programming at all 32 Great River Regional Library locations reaches its highest intensity during the summer, with concerts, art classes, reading programs, magicians and more.



Legislators decided again in 2013 to provide libraries with Legacy support from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. Legacy funding is being used to enrich community life with these programs and more at GRRL this summer.

- Origami workshops
- Puppet shows
- Basket weaving classes
- Magician Jared Sherlock
- Woody Guthrie 100th anniversary celebration concert
- Cartooning workshops
- Bruce the Bug Guy
- Comic ventriloquist James Wedgwood
- Slip Twister in concert
- Mysterious Creatures of Minnesota from Chad Lewis

To find out about programs at your local library, check the Events page at griver.org.

Great River Regional Library is seeking support for its Summer Reading Program. Your support and tax-deductible donation will help make the program attractive to kids. Visit griver.org/support-library to make an online donation.

Support 2013 Summer Program With Donation to GRRL

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: _____

Office use only:
Pstm. _____
Amt. _____
Ck # _____
Init. _____

Survive Showers with an Umbrella from The Great River Store

Summer is here, bringing rain as well as sunshine. Stay dry with the new folding umbrella available through the GRRL store. Its 41-inch canopy will protect you from summer showers and it folds to a convenient 9 inches.

Bistro Mug - Year round, start your days with coffee or end them with cocoa from our grande size bistro mug.

Bottle - If you are working outside, planting your garden or cleaning out the garage, carry a refreshing beverage in the library's new aluminum bottle. Its flip top is designed for easy access, and the rugged metal construction is BPA-free.

All library store items carry the GRRL logo. Show your support for library services by using library store products. Visit the store by using the Services/Store link on the library's home page, griver.org.

Have an item you would like to see available? Let us know by sending us your suggestions on the store link.



16 oz. Bistro Mug

This black bistro mug is sized for the Parisian latte. A little larger than most mugs, it can also be used for a warming soup. In black. \$6.99

41 inch Folding Umbrella

Designed for maximum convenience and protection, this umbrella features a 41-inch polyester canopy and shaft that folds to just 9 inches. Slips easily into a carry bag or automobile glove compartment. In black. \$16.99



Aluminum Bottle

Lightweight aluminum bottle with a flip top, drink thru lid is perfect for fluid replacement at the gym and for outdoor use. Wide-mouth bottle cleans easily and is BPA free! In silver. \$9.99



griver.org/GRRLstore

New Online Tool Maximizes Value of Gifted Materials

The library receives many book donations each year. They all have value: some because the library needs additional copies, and others because the library can sell them and use the revenue.

Deciding whether to keep or sell donated items used to be very time consuming, but the library's IT staff has created a computer program that improves the process. It's called TitleDashboard, and it quickly tells the staff:

- how many copies of a book (or CD or DVD) the library has
- when they last checked out, and
- checkout totals for each copy

TitleDashboard makes its own recommendation for whether to keep or sell newly donated copies. Staff then consider additional factors such as the popularity of the author before making the final decision about whether to add the item to the collection or put it aside for the next book sale.

With this new online tool developed in-house, decisions can be made more quickly than before, and with complete confidence that the library is getting the most value from items donated by its supporters.

Save a Tree: Get Your Currents By Email

This Currents newsletter is available to library supporters requesting it via email. To reduce costs, save trees and, of course, protect our environment we encourage as many supporters 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 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 supporters. We thank you warmly for your support, and if you have any suggestions we would love to hear from you.



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