

## Children's Web Page Updated

New graphics, new content and new reading lists are featured on the updated children's webpage at [griver.org/kids](http://griver.org/kids).

The site was updated in time for the 2014 Summer Reading Program with the goal of making it easier for families to find materials for children and for children to find materials for themselves.

Content is separated into four age groups and categories: 0-5, 6-8, 9-12, and Parents. The sections are filled with resources on early literacy, child development, school, homeschooling and parenting, much of it through access to comprehensive book lists.

Several of the book lists were prepared specifically for the new page launch. They include:

- Loss of a Loved One
- Loss of a Pet
- Going to the doctor / Being Sick
- Military
- Children and special needs
- Bullying
- Starting School
- Great Books for Babies!
- Great Books for Toddlers!
- Welcoming a New Baby Brother or Sister
- Let's Celebrate Dads!
- Let's Celebrate Moms!

## Long Term Director Resigns

Kirsty Smith formally announced her resignation from the Executive Director position at Great River Regional Library effective Monday, June 23.

"I have been honored in the trust placed in me in the past eight years," Smith said. "I have also been pleased to work with such wonderful people doing important work. I wish everyone well." Among other things, she will be attending to the publication process for a novel she has been working on for several years.

Smith arrived at GRRL in January of 2006 after working in Colorado libraries for ten years. Prior to that, she had served in the United States Air Force where she was commissioned in the Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps. She graduated from the University of North Dakota School of Law with a Juris Doctorate in 1991, earned her Master's in Library and Information Science from the University of Texas at Austin in 1995, and recently completed a Master of Fine Arts program. She is a graduate of Technical High School in St. Cloud, and has fond memories of riding her bicycle to the old St. Cloud Carnegie Library prior to its demise and replacement in the late '70s.

Almost immediately on arrival as the library's director, Smith was thrust into the planning of the new St. Cloud Public Library. Groundbreaking took place in November 2006. It was a massive project that consumed a lot of her time even after the library opened in September 2008. This project also saw the expansion of library fund development efforts (now part of Public Relations) as fundraising intensified with the addition of a capital campaign to support the new library. During Smith's tenure, new library buildings were also constructed in Elk River, St. Michael, and Staples.

Within months of her arrival, Smith had visited each of the 32 GRRL locations and interviewed staff to get their ideas on how the organization might improve. Comments were organized into themes that eventually became an action plan for moving the library forward with improved communication and focus on patron services.

A year after Smith arrived she established a Virtual Services Team to oversee the development of services delivered to library patrons via the Internet. She viewed the GRRL website as the library's 33rd branch, and she encouraged efforts to improve the library's online accessibility and presence. Wireless service was made available in all of the library's locations by March 2008. After two years of planning, the library launched a new website in April 2009. The Digital Library opened in October 2010, providing patrons with downloadable eBooks and eAudiobooks.

The increased focus on patron services that was determined in June 2007 was further solidified in July 2009 when Smith announced plans for organizational restructure that resulted in the current administrative core.

GRRL staff, management and Board members wish her the best as she engages in a new chapter in her life.



## Kids Learn Skills At Coding Dojo

The ability to write computer code is a skill shared by people like Bill Gates (Microsoft), Jack Dorsey (Twitter) and the founders of technology companies changing the world.

In many other countries (e.g. China and England) computer programming is a compulsory school subject. America is far behind.

Now children and teens can begin learning coding through a St. Cloud library program called Coder Dojo. Participants will work in groups and learn through interaction with volunteer mentors and other students. The younger children will begin in a language called Scratch. Older students will have the opportunity to learn web programming languages such as HTML 5, CSS 3 and JavaScript.

If the Coder Dojo is popular, the library may offer coding instruction in other programs around the region.

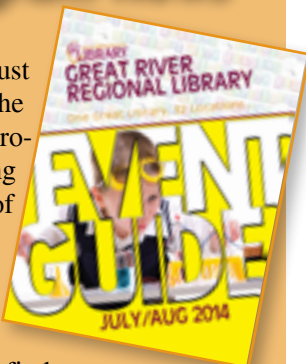
## Event Guide: for Program News

July and August may be the busiest programming months of the year. Pick up a library *Event*

*Guide* to find out about programs for children, adults and teens, including:

- Ultimate LEGO Art
- Bruce the Bug Guy
- Summer Watercolor Painting
- Experiment with Nature
- Glow in the Dark Art Camp
- Dazzling Dave the Yo Yo Guy
- Smokey Bear Storytime
- Figure Drawing Manga Style and many, many more.

There's something for everybody to enjoy.



## Cokato Remodel Gets Rave Reviews

"Wow!" Patrons who visited the Cokato Public Library after its remodeling in April were amazed by the difference. Before the remodeling, the library was dark and crowded. When the library reopened in April after significant remodeling, excited patrons walked in saying, "It's so pretty" and "It looks bigger." They praised the new floor plan.

The renovation included a new circulation desk and computer table, attractive art and light fixtures, and new flooring throughout. The library looks more spacious and less cluttered but actually has more shelving space for materials as well as a bistro table for teens.

Cokato Library Services Coordinator Sheila Rieke was delighted. "I want to thank all the staff, the Friends of the Cokato Area Library, all the volunteers and city staff who helped make this happen," she said.



The new Cokato library looked pristine prior to reopening. More than 150 individuals attended the Grand Opening on June 9. Many children registered for the Summer Reading Program and others registered for library cards.

## Book A Librarian For Lengthy Service Questions

A new service called "Book A Librarian" was trialed this spring at several library locations.

Librarians from the GRRL headquarters in St. Cloud have been available at five pilot libraries by appointment or on a drop-in basis to meet one-on-one with library patrons and answer their questions.

"We've had a really good response by appointment," said Patron Services Librarian Connie Laing. In many locations, the desk is staffed by only one person at a time, making it difficult to provide individualized service without making others wait to check out. When busy staff cannot provide extended service to an individual, a librarian can meet the need for assistance with genealogy research, difficult school research assignments, technology questions, etc.

"What we have received mostly has been technology questions," Laing said. "People want to know how to access library services and the Digital Library through their devices. Each branch is different, so patrons need the kind of individual assistance we are able to provide. They bring their device, and we can go through the downloading process with them."

The trial period ended in June. It will be assessed and revised before being offered at additional locations, Laing said.



Public Services Librarian  
Connie Laing.



## Experiment with the 2014 Summer Reading Program

The Summer Reading Program theme for 2014 is based on science. For children up to age 12 the theme is “Experiment With Reading,” the program theme for teens is “Read, Think, React.” The program ends Saturday, Aug. 9, by which time children and teens will have read books and had fun doing lots of fun summer activities at the library. Libraries prepared numerous storytimes and programs for children to enjoy built around science themes.

Numerous studies have found that NOT reading during the summer contributes to a relative decline in reading skills termed the achievement gap. Failing to read during the summer causes reading skills among children to decline, putting kids behind when they begin school in the fall. Over several years, cumulative summer learning loss puts those children far behind their peers.

Participation in organized summer reading programs has been proven to be an excellent way to prevent the achievement gap. It’s fun, it’s easy, and it works!

This year’s program was adjusted to encourage long-term reading instead of short-term reading. In previous years, children could enter prize drawings by completing reading vouchers that signified time spent reading, even if all that reading took place on one day. This year’s drawing forms are designed to encourage reading all summer long.

## Computer Use Impact Study

Library technology services are key public access points for information and opportunity, according to an impact survey conducted at GRRL in April.

The largest use of library computers was for social inclusion (37%), which includes activities such as communicating with friends, pursuing a hobby, finding reviews, and learning new skills. Other high use categories included:

- 31% for employment needs
- 28% for educational activities
- 27% to get information on health and wellness topics

The library’s 32 locations have a total of 201 computers available to the public. They are a popular service, and at most locations all computer stations will be in use for some part of the day. Each location also has wireless Internet service.

More than half of users (56%) reported having received one-on-one technology help from library staff or volunteers in the past 12 months.

Twenty-three percent of the 772 individuals who completed the survey were low income (below 200% of the poverty line).

Great River Regional Library’s 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](http://griver.org/support-library) to make an online donation.

## Support 2014 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.

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

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](http://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/GRRL store](http://griver.org/GRRL store)

## Overdrive Keeps Digital Library Current

The migration to mobile technologies such as smartphones and tablets from full-size desktop computers is a trend among digital service users. Unsurprisingly, not everything that works well on a desktop computer does so on a smartphone. GRRL's website designers and technology staff ensure that the [griver.org](http://griver.org) website is fully operational for all users.

*Overdrive*, the platform behind the GRRL Digital Library, recently modified its layouts. The GRRL homepage now features collections with more mobile-friendly images. Patrons accessing the Digital Library via smartphone or tablet will find it easier to use. The update also reduced user clicks by adding the ability to borrow, sample, add to Wish List, share and see title details all directly from the cover image.

Use of the Digital Library continues to grow. Total eBook and eAudiobook checkouts for the first quarter of 2014 were 39,680. The same period in 2013 saw 22,091 checkouts. An average of 3,004 different individuals checked out books monthly in the first quarter of 2014, versus 2,110 for the first quarter of 2013.

These numbers are still small (approximately 4.7%) compared to those for traditional library materials.

## 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](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 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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