



CURRENTS

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Online Database Gives Students Test Practice

The online Learning Express Library can relieve test stress by providing online tuition and sample tests to help students do their best.

The Learning Express Library is on the griver.org Databases page. It's an electronic resource, logically mapped to help individuals find exactly what they need. Options include:

- Adult Learning Center
- Career Center
- School Center,
- College Preparation Center
- College Center
- Job and Career Accelerator
- Computer Skills Center, and
- High School Equivalency Center

Each area is organized to help students achieve success. For example, the College Preparation Center includes tests, tutorials and eBooks organized under:

- Prepare for Your ACT Test
- Prepare for Your AP Exam
- Prepare for Your SAT Test
- Prepare for Your PSAT/NMSQT test
- Prepare for Your TOEFL iBT test
- Prepare for Your THEA Test and
- College Admissions Essay Writing

If you or someone you know is looking at education or career transitions, make sure they know about the Learning Express Library.

New Core Values and Strategic Plan Set Course for Future Library Activity

The information environment in which libraries function is being transformed, even if it seems they have an unchanging mission and purpose.

Fifteen years ago librarians were busy answering questions across the desk, usually using reference books that only they knew how to find and search. Today's patrons are more likely to need help managing and selecting from the mountain of information available at Google, YouTube and elsewhere. A genealogy resource such as Ancestry.com wasn't even available ten years ago. Today, the job of our librarians is to help you get the most out of the time you spend searching there and elsewhere online.

During 2015, Great River Regional Library went through a process to review its core values and strategic plan. The process included public feedback obtained through surveys and community meetings, as well as input from regional stakeholders and the GRRL Board of Trustees. The goal was to make sure we do know where we are going, and that we are all headed in the same direction! Here is an abbreviated version.

Strategic Plan for 2016-2020

The library mission is: *Explore, Learn, Connect.*

The library's vision is: *The neighborhood gateway: Inspiring Central Minnesota to shape the future through exploration, knowledge and connection.*

The library is a patron centered organization, and this commitment is expressed through three core values: *Exceptional Service, Forward Thinking, and Community Focus.*

The library's service priorities are:

Literacy: All users will have the resources they need to develop and improve their literacy skills in order to succeed in school, meet their personal goals and fulfill their responsibilities as students, parents, citizens and workers.

Access: All users will have access to reliable sources of information in welcoming virtual or physical spaces that support community connection and engagement.

Lifelong Learning: All users will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest, continue to learn and complement their quality of life

The library's organizational priorities are:

Exceptional Service: We will be an empowered, engaged, well-trained staff ready to provide exceptional service.

Operational Excellence: We will use resources effectively in order to be adaptable to future needs.

Community Focus: We will enhance our service to current and future patrons by embracing the diversity of our communities



Friends Meet Friends Planned For Fall

A fall Friends Meet Friends event is being planned to take place at the St. Cloud Public Library on Thursday, Sept. 22.

The event highlight will be an interactive presentation provided by Sue Hall, Director of the Library Strategies Consulting Group, which is an arm of the St. Paul Friends of the Library.

In addition, the meeting will give the groups an opportunity to share ideas and information on recruitment, fundraising, ways to support the library, etc.

Twenty-seven GRRL library branches have Friends groups. Together, their efforts provide tremendous support to GRRL, but all of them operate independently. Most provide resources to just their own local branch, but the St. Cloud Friends of the Library use revenue from the bookstore they operate in the library to support numerous regionwide efforts. In 2015 the St. Cloud Friends donated \$33,179.55.

The library's public relations department will host the event.



Wish List Opens Door To Specific Donations

Do you have a wish list, something posted on the refrigerator, or more likely written in a journal? If not, there's probably a wish list posted inside your mind. Depending on where you are at with your life it might look like this:

"I wish I could spend more time with the grandkids."

"I wish my daughter/son could meet a nice boy/girl."

"I wish the rabbits would quit eating my flowers."

And probably for most of us, "I wish we could all just settle our differences and get along!"

The library's wish list is a little different. We have a special WishList you can find on the library's website, griver.org. That's where the library shares lists of books, music and movies staff wish they could purchase, but that we don't because popular demand for other items is greater. Not everything on the WishList is a book, DVD or music. GRRL is hoping to purchase more of the We Play Here kits that encourage young children to learn through play at the library. Twenty initial kits were purchased through grant funding, and mini kits have been purchased by the Howard Lake Friends of the Library. It will cost another \$3,000 to purchase 12 more so that each branch can keep a kit on hand. Thanks to the Annandale Area Friends of the Library who have donated \$300 to get the ball rolling on this wish. Another \$2,700 is being sought.

Also highlighted on the WishList right now are the Complete Basement Tapes by Bob Dylan, a six disc set of 1967 recording sessions with the Band. Great music from a great time for people of the Woodstock generation. Cost is \$120. If you're a person who would enjoy Dylan and the Band, you might also enjoy "Haight: Love, Rock, and Revolution," a book of sixties-era San Francisco photography, available for a WishList donation of \$50.

GRRL would also love to purchase a large quantity of Lego building blocks that children can use in a makerspace. The estimated cost of this item is \$5,000.

WishList donations can be made at any level, online or by check.

Get Ready For VuFind: a Better Library Catalog

Get ready to see some changes. The library catalog and website are going through a complete redesign process to make them easier to use, no matter what kind of device or computer they are viewed on.

As part of this process, the library is moving its catalog to a new search engine called VuFind. The classic catalog is in place alongside the new VuFind catalog for the time being. But before the summer ends, everyone will be using the new version.

Many people now view Internet pages through smartphones, so webmasters have been forced to build new pages with responsive web design, meaning that the page responds to the screen it is viewed on. Redesigning the library's website to be responsive has given staff the opportunity to also review and upgrade its content.

The new catalog is built with open source software; the library will not have to pay or wait for changes and improvements. Instead, the library's IT staff will write code to make improvements where necessary. Some of that is already taking place. Patrons are trying the new catalog and letting staff know how they feel it can be further improved. Right out of the box the new catalog allows for both broader and more refined searches.

It's hard to comprehend the work that went into keeping track of all the library's materials before computerized automation: the endless stamping of cards and filing to ensure nothing went astray. Computers changed all that, but even computers need upgrades. This new catalog is another step, another improvement, in that process.

Check out the library's new catalog. Search for a title and place a hold. Let us know what you think.



Read for the Win In GRRL's Summer Reading Program

Summers are busy. The warm weather encourages kids to climb on their bikes and ride around town. It's not unusual for them to meet friends in our buildings. Often, in the summer, whole new families arrive at the library, especially if they have children eager to sign up for summer reading.

Staff look forward to the energy these children bring. This year's program theme is *Read For The Win*. It's a theme designed to take advantage of the Olympic competition that gets underway in August.

The library offers three programs for different age groups: an early literacy program for ages 0 to 5, an independent reading program for ages 3 to 12, and a teen program for grades 6 to 12. Branches are selecting individual prizes to encourage participation, and each library will have two Grand Prizes, such as T-ball sets for youngsters, and the Scrabble Jr. game for older children.

All of GRRL's 32 branches will select from a menu of programming options and fun games for children to play such as sports trivia, make & takes and a Tape Line Challenge for 5 and younger. We're offering Nature Olympics with St. John's Outdoor University, Animal Tracks, Food Bingo, Bruce the Bug Guy, Ice Cream Socials, magicians, jugglers, yo-yo champions and much, much more. To see the entire schedule as well as



the schedule for each individual branch, visit the library's website at griver.org, or pick up a copy of the library Event Guide for the summer, available at all GRRL branches.

Of course, the value of the Summer Reading Program goes far beyond the fun, games and friendships children and teens enjoy in our libraries. It's all about staying in touch with reading so kids avoid the summer slide. Maintaining reading skills is vital if children are going to be prepared when school rolls by again.

Thanks to all the individuals and organizations that donate to keep our Summer Reading Program financially healthy and fun!

Read Down Fines

"Read Down Your Fines" will take place again Monday, June 20 through Saturday, June 25.

This event is for children and teens who hold 'minor' cards and are unable to borrow library materials because of outstanding fines. It gives them the opportunity to regain library privileges just by reading at the library.

Individuals taking part in the program will get a coupon from the library desk on which they record their time spent reading in the library. They are allowed to read materials of their choice, but it must be physical print materials such as a book or magazine. For each 15 minutes spent reading, they eliminate \$1 in fines.

Read Down can only be applied to fines for late return of materials. It can't be applied to fines or processing fees for lost and damaged items.

Read Down Your Fines is totally paid for through public donations. Since it was introduced in 2013, more than 800 teens and children have taken advantage of this program and begun using the library again. The average fine paid off is approximately \$5.

The Summer Reading Program helps children maintain their reading skills. Your support and tax-deductible donation will help to make the program an essential part of summer. Visit griver.org/support-library to make an online donation.

2016 Donation To Support Summer Reading Program

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. _____

Gifts for Everyone! Put Smiles on Faces With a Visit to the Library Store

Show your support for library services by shopping at the library store.

The adult hooded sweatshirt here is also available in a youth size in gold, orange, purple, red, royal, navy, kelly green, forest green, texas orange and black, so you can match up to most school colors.

Our toddler full zip hoodie is for youngsters with no drawcord at the hood. Durable and warm cotton poly fleece makes it a great item for taking to the cabin or park.

The men's and ladies' selections on the library store website have summer in mind, so take a look to see what we have that you will enjoy.

Also, if you have a big reader in the family and you are thinking about birthday gifts, remember the Great River Store \$10 gift certificates.

Let people know you're a library supporter. Buy at the library store! (store.rambow.com/grrl)

Adult Hooded Sweatshirt

White contrast at the shoulders, base of hood and under the arms. Athletic cut gives easy movement. Minimal shrinkage means this sweatshirt will retain its look. Available in several colors. \$25.98 (XS) to \$31.98 (4X)



Day Tote

Classic, go-anywhere tote for the beach, the market and the library! Dimensions: 14" high x 14" wide x 5.5" deep. Strong handle. Color options. \$20.00



Ladies' 1/2 zip pullover

Ideal for year-round layering. Extra stretchy. Features Sport-Wick moisture-wicking technology for comfort. Half-zip lets you control the ventilation. Thumbholes to keep your hands warm. \$41 (XS) to \$47 (4X)



store.rambow.com/grrl/

Get Out In The Garden at GRRL

From acorn squash to zucchini, there's a lot to grow in the land of a thousand lakes.

Minnesotans may enjoy only a short growing season, but they pack a lot into it.

Before summer arrives, Minnesota gardening is a guessing game. Even on the warmest of spring days there's the fear of a frost just around the corner. But once June arrives it's time to go all in. Aerate the lawns. Cut back the shrubs that need it. Dead head the perennials. And take care of your planting.

The library has abundant books and other materials in which you can find gardening advice. The digital eMagazine selection includes *HGTV Magazine*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Country Living*, *Fine Gardening* and *Organic Life*. They are all available free of charge as downloads with your library card.

And every branch has access to a fabulous collection of gardening books. There's a whole series of "*Gardening For Dummies*," as well as gardening for the no-garden gardener, the straw-bale gardener and gardeners of every other stripe.

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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