



Library joins with other organizations working to improve educational outcomes

By Karen Lemke

Community organizations in Olmsted County are investing time, local talent, and financial resources with one goal in mind: improving educational outcomes in local students.

Representatives from 15 different organizations are working to develop a set of recommendations for community approval to create a sustainable, data-based, educational effort. Library Director Audrey Betcher serves as the City of Rochester's representative for the "Cradle To Career" initiative. She says helping students -of all ages- succeed is an important community issue. "There are needs at all age and grade levels: only 31% of kids have the skills needed when they enter kindergarten and only approximately 80% of Rochester students graduate high school. What do we need to do differently to change that? And what other struggles exist locally?"

In April, Betcher was part of the committee that hosted a community summit on the issue to gauge how much support there is to move forward with tackling educational outcomes together as a community. The summit was funded by Rochester Rotary clubs and co-hosted with the

United Way of Olmsted County. Based upon feedback from the summit, community leaders recommended hiring StriveTogether, a national leader on Cradle to Career efforts, to help craft goals and develop a plan to improve student success.

"It's about developing a community-wide effort with shared goals to make an impact at all levels," explains Betcher.

Members of the Cradle to Career planning team spearheading the work include representatives from various sectors: education, local government, higher education, non-profits, foundations, students, service clubs, parents, and more. Their charter is to develop a set of recommendations which will launch the initiative with cross-community participation and long term sustainability.

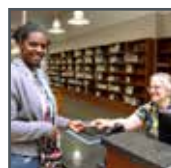
Betcher says the movement fits into the library's overall strategic plan. "One of our top goals is to support local students to help them succeed. Having shared community-wide goals and a plan to reach those goals will help us be even more supportive of local students."

For more information about the initiative visit <http://bit.ly/RochC2C>

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Summer Playlist expands beyond library walls

Hundreds of Rochester-area residents participated in the library's new Summer Playlist program this year, as they looked for new ways to "read, create, connect, and explore."

The program kicked off with Fine Forgiveness Week in early June. Visitors to the library, Bookmobile or BookBike were forgiven any overdue fines during that week. In all, 327 lost items were returned (approximate value: \$8,175) and 1,571 people had their fines waived.



After the initial start, the program kicked into high gear with activities, prizes, and unique events. Several outreach events near local schools gave new opportunities for kids and their caregivers. A StarLab in Byron, Rocket Fun at Longfellow, and Outdoor Games at Gage East were all part of this year's outreach activities. Head of Youth

Services, Heather Acerro, says the new events outside the library's walls fit perfectly in the Summer Playlist program.

"Summer Playlist is about disconnecting from devices and really experiencing summer," explains Acerro, adding, "For some people it's reading, for others it's connecting with old friends."

So far the feedback from the program (which ends September 2nd) has been very positive. Acerro says library



patrons of all ages are commenting about the program as a whole and also about the special outreach events happening throughout Olmsted County.

"We're hearing great feedback from adults and kids at each event," says Acerro, "The majority of our participants are just excited to have better access to the activities we offer regularly at the downtown library."

For information about events happening inside and outside the library, visit the RPL online calendar at: <http://bit.ly/RochEvents>.

Getting to the Library

Construction projects near the library will continue for the next several months. On busier days don't forget our "Hassle-Free Options."

RPL offers:

BookBike and ArtCart stops at local parks <http://bit.ly/RPLbookbike>

Bookmobile services throughout Olmsted County <http://bit.ly/RPLbkmb>

24-hour digital collection services, including Overdrive: <http://bit.ly/rplDigital>



New Book Group in a Bag Kit Staff Recommendations

Looking for a great read? Try one of our staff picks!

Crimes Against a Book Club

by Kathy Cooperman

- Recommended by Kim Edson

Best friends Annie and Sara need cash and they need it fast. Annie is desperate for money to afford expensive therapy for an autistic son; Sarah is balancing IVF treatments and reducing her hours to start a family. They come up with a brilliant plan to sell anti-aging face cream to the wealthy women in Annie's book club to get some quick cash. The plan appears innocent enough except for the special (and not so legal) ingredient. Each chapter starts with a musing about book title common to discussion groups providing additional suggestions for future discussions.



Wonder by R.J. Palacio

- Recommended by Karen Lemke

Auggie is a 10-year-old with a facial deformity, working his way through the 5th grade after being homeschooled his entire life. Author R.J. Palacio provides a glimpse into the feelings and emotions we all face when entering a new situation and how perspective can really make a difference.



Inspiring, thoughtful, and heartfelt, Wonder is a great read for adults, teens and older children.

Address Unknown

by Katherine Kressman Taylor

- Recommended by Beth Befort

Max Eisenstein is a German Jewish art dealer living in San Francisco. His friend and business partner Martin Schulse moves back to Germany in 1932 and soon becomes a prominent businessman and Nazi party member. Their relationship is followed through a series of letters whose content becomes more ominous as Hitler tightens his grip on Europe and on Martin.



Did you know Rochester Public Library has dozens of Book Group in a Bag kits for you and your book club? New titles have recently been added.

Visit <http://bit.ly/RPLbookgroupbags>

ArtCart joins BookBike through the streets of Rochester

It's been a beautiful BookBike season as staff and community members welcome a new addition: the RPL ArtCart.

Loaded with art supplies, the ArtCart is providing hours of creativity and inspiration for visitors of all ages. Activities have so far ranged from painting with watercolors to creating solar prints. According to Head of Youth Services, Heather Acerro, adding the ArtCart better mimics the services available at the downtown library.

"Customers enjoy books and materials that we offer, but the art room, Minnesota Children's Museum Smart Play Spot, and other activities are equally as important," she says, adding, "Our BookBike visitors appreciate having access to books and materials so we knew adding the ArtCart would provide greater access to art activities."

In the month of June alone, the ArtCart saw 508 visitors, higher than library staff anticipated. "We're the first library we know of that has both a BookBike and ArtCart, so we weren't sure what to expect," says Acerro.

Heading into the fall months, the BookBike will be unhitched and transformed into a push cart. "Last year our weekly visits to Bravo Espresso in the Skyway were successful, so we hope to return to that location this fall," says Acerro. Meanwhile, the ArtCart will take a break during the colder months and return next year for another season of art and inspiration.

To plan your trip to the BookBike and ArtCart before summer's end, visit: <http://bit.ly/RPLbookbike>.



Libraries Change Lives: Miracle's First Library Card

When Miracle Cain walked in the library in the late spring, she was on a mission: to get her first library card.

Miracle, a student with Rochester Academy for Independent Living, explained to Library Assistant Lynn Pentek that she learned about getting a library card from her teacher, Mary Alcott.

"She was incredibly excited to get her card," says Pentek, adding, "Her joy was infectious."

Miracle says the excitement comes from knowing that she can check out a wide variety of materials, including DVDs and from the fact that library cards are fairly simple to get. "I learned it's so easy to get a card!" she exclaimed.

Alcott says she shares the importance of getting a library card with all of her students who all have disabilities and have transitioned out of high school. She says the RAIL program helps students learn the functioning skills they need to be productive and social members of the community.

"I am the community participation teacher so I work with students to volunteer in the community, plan social outings and learn how to use the community resources that are available to them as members of the community," explains Alcott. "I teach the students that the Library is a free resource for books and movies and magazines and teach them that they can use the Library's computers and printers to check emails.



She says she also focuses on how the library can be a safe space for students to sit and read, especially while they are waiting for a bus. "Most students use the city bus and often have to wait downtown for connections."

Meanwhile, Pentek says assisting patrons who truly value the library is incredibly rewarding. "It's great to see someone smile when they get their card, and Miracle's smile was so encouraging and really captures the joy a library card can bring."



Local construction company instills reading by installing mini-libraries

More mini-libraries are open for business in Olmsted County, thanks in part to Knutson Construction.

The over 100-year-old, Rochester-based company installed 20 mini-libraries earlier this summer. Youth Services Librarian Jon Allen says the library-supported Neighbors Read mini-library program wouldn't be possible without support from businesses and community members. "The Neighbors Read program is a real community effort," says Allen, adding, "We're grateful for strong supporters like Knutson."

Rochester Public Library currently supports 180 mini-libraries and community bookshelves throughout Olmsted County. For information on one in your area, visit: <http://bit.ly/neighborsreadOLM>

Meet Libby

Libby is the new OverDrive app that works on most smart phones and tablets. We will provide a brief overview of some of the new features.

Feel free to bring your own device to download the app. We will also have devices to try out. Do you have your own Libby story? Feel free to share.

The handout that we are using to introduce new ebook and audio-book users to the Libby App can be found here: <http://bit.ly/RPLandLibby>

Info from OverDrive re: Libby (which included a nifty intro video) can be found at: <http://bit.ly/MeetLibby>



Rochesterfest Auditorium Book Sale: A Huge Success

Four times every year, the Friends of the Rochester Public Library hold a book sale in the auditorium of the Library. Thousands of books, in every conceivable category, fill the auditorium. For the book lover, it is a sight to behold. The books are categorized to aid the browsing and shopping experience. There are books for sale to pique the interest of every book lover—from books on sports, health, gardening, biographies, mysteries, history, cookbooks, the classics—and an amazing assortment of books for children and teens.

Not only does this help “recycle” books, the book sale is a fundraiser for the Public Library. Thanks to the tremendous efforts of the dozens of volunteers who donated over 225



hours of their time, this year’s sale raised over \$9,000. This money will be used to support library programs and initiatives.

The next auditorium book sale will be held October 12 to 15, followed by the December Gift Quality Book & Bake Sale December 8 and 9.

Come and check out this incredible book sale! If you would like to help with the auditorium book sale, please contact Marilyn Campbell at 328.2341.


Staff Breakfast

On May 1st the Friends held their annual breakfast to thank the staff of RPL for the amazing job they do! Thanks to the generosity of Dunn Brothers, the Friends served delicious quiche and fruit. It was a great way to start a Monday morning!



Become a Volunteer

We are looking for individuals who would like to volunteer at RPL and become members of the Friends of the Rochester Public Library. There are many different ways you can put your time and talent to work helping RPL and encouraging literacy. The Friends have been serving RPL since 1949 and we would love to have you join us. Contact Marilyn Campbell at 328.2341 for more information.



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Book signing immediately following discussion.

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Letter from the Library Foundation Executive Director

As summer continues, so does the cycle of life and all that entails. New flower growth, trees budding, babies teetering about, and Minnesotans enjoying those long hot summer days. For me, summer means a time to review what we have accomplished thus far, and start planning for what lies ahead.

Summer also means new growth opportunities for us as our Foundation website now includes a Wish List of items needed by various departments. The list includes everything from a commercial paper cutter to shelving to children's programming needs. These are unbudgeted items that we hope to fund through donations. Check it out to see if there's an item that you personally would like to contribute toward at <http://bit.ly/RPLdonate>. There are other ways you can contribute via IBM Matching, Thrivent, Amazon Prime, United

Way, Community Contributions, etc. Check out that info below. **Your financial support makes all things possible. You can contribute online or via the enclosed envelope.**

We are at our six month transition in new volunteer leadership as Martha McClees, Mayo Department of Development, took over as Board President in January. She is a great leader following in the footsteps of Chris Wendland, Attorney at Wendland Utz, who led us through a transition time over the last two and a half years. Please follow us on this continued journey through the seasons and the great things that are popping up at the

Rochester Public Library and Foundation.



Vicki Allen

*Executive Director, Rochester Public
Library Foundation
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Olmsted County**

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<https://www.givemn.org/organization/Rochester-Public-Library-Foundation>



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For more information about these giving options and others, call 507.328.2387. The Rochester Public Library Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.



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Book-A-Year Endowment

When you give \$500 to the Book-A-Year Endowment, a book in your name (or the name you designate) will be purchased each year in perpetuity for Rochester Public Library.

**Your donation will honor
the special people in your
life and help the library
to grow as well.**

Your name will be included in a memorial book on display in the Foundation Office at the library.

A nameplate will be placed on the inside front cover of one book each year in perpetuity for Rochester Public Library.

A letter can be sent to the honoree to keep as a record of your donation.

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Sunday *(school year)*
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Saturday *(summer)*
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Sunday *(summer)*
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**School hours start the day after
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The Backstory: MaryTeresa and Books on the Fly

MaryTeresa Gibbons is part of a family with a deep affection for libraries.

"When my grandmother would visit it was an unspoken rite that we would walk two miles to the library, fill up bags with books then walk home and repeat the process a few days later. It gave us time to talk, tell jokes, discuss books we had read and get great exercise. Special memories! We should have known, though, that something was wrong the day she said she was too tired to walk to the library and didn't even want my dad to drive us. She passed away a week later of congestive heart failure."

That love of libraries her grandmother shared has continued over the years, with MaryTeresa often bragging to family members about what she found at Rochester Public Library. "When RPL started installing the mini-libraries around town I was excited and sent pictures. I began bragging about RPL...the quilt in the entry, more mini-libraries, the bike mobile, the special events, the vibrancy of the library and its integral part of the community." But her siblings didn't necessarily believe RPL could compare with their own libraries, located in larger cities.

When MaryTeresa's mom passed away, family members flew in "from all over the world." She says while family waited



during a plane delay at the Rochester International Airport, they "discovered the airport library." The "airport library" is actually a partnership with Rochester Public Library, Friends of the Rochester Public Library, and the airport, called "Books on the Fly." This grant-supported project features a mini-library and digital kiosk, offering free books to travelers.

Once MaryTeresa's family discovered the "Books on the Fly" program, they changed their view of RPL. "Next thing I knew they were posting on Facebook, checking out books and reading them on their planes, bragging about this wonderful concept to everyone and actually admitting that RPL is much more innovative than [other libraries] when it came to accessibility of books!"

Since 2016, hundreds of physical and digital books have been enjoyed by travelers passing through Rochester International Airport.

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