



Library staff show the peeling carpet from the second-floor Reference area after a September, 2019 water leak.

## MONTHS AFTER WATER LEAK, REPAIRS AND CHANGES ARE HAPPENING

“Are you remodeling?” is a question often fielded by library staff, months after a water softener malfunction led to an overnight water leak, heavily damaging the Rochester Public Library.

Now, final repair work is happening in spaces throughout the library’s central core. In the library’s second-floor reference section, damage to hundreds of square feet of carpet forced staff to block off that area with a temporary wall of shelves and other furniture. Sara Patalita, Head of Reference Services, says the water damage forced many staff to relocate.

“We shifted staff into other areas, which forced us to close off the Computer Lab and group meeting spaces,” explains Patalita. “But we see an end in sight and eagerly wait to ‘get back to a new normal.’”

The “new normal” will actually be quite different, once all the work wraps up in the spring. According to Patalita, the forced rearrangement of the second floor led to a few surprising results.

“Right after the flood, we weren’t sure how to reopen the second floor, so we actually moved our reference desk to the first floor, near the library entrance. When we did that, we found out that people liked having access to our trained reference staff.”

The increased access to reference librarians led to a dramatic increase in the number of questions asked by patrons, and Patalita says that trend continued after the second floor reopened.

“In late October we moved back to the second floor, but with the damaged

*(continued on page 2)*

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## "Months After Water Leak..." (continued from cover)

carpet, we had to create a temporary reference desk," says Patalita.

She says in the months that followed, staff realized the value of being more accessible to patrons. So in addition to new carpet, the second floor will be rearranged, providing an updated look and feel to the reference area.

One other change: more public computers.

"The demand on our public computers continues to be high, as many people rely on the library as their only source for computer access," says Patalita.

JT Enger Construction is completing the majority of the

library's \$213,000 repair work, and the library is working with the city's insurance provider to cover those costs.

Library Director Audrey Betcher says that in addition to changing the layout of the second floor, other changes will also be noticeable.

"Our original wallpaper and paint was from the early 1990s, in shades of taupe and beige, but the replacement wallpaper and paint will bring in more color," says Betcher.

The repair work, which is expected to last through the spring, can be viewed at [www.rplmn.org/waterleak](http://www.rplmn.org/waterleak).

## NEW STRATEGY? WELCOMING ALL TO CONNECT AND LEARN.

A new report from Wilder Research shows that Rochester-area residents are interested in being welcomed and connected in the community.

In late 2019, the library teamed up with Wilder to conduct a series of focus groups and key interviews to learn more about community needs.

Library Director Audrey Betcher says the report was key to informing the library's strategic planning team as they developed a new strategic plan. "Wilder's research demonstrates the need for greater community engagement, because without the input of local residents we can't provide the best resources to meet community needs."

A committee of community members, library board members, and representatives from the Rochester Public Library Foundation and Friends of the Library all worked alongside staff and facilitators from Wilder Research to finalize the plan, which was formally adopted in January.

"Our previous strategic plan led to innovative programs and services, which led to national recognition," says Betcher, crediting community members for providing input in the plan that led to the library's National Medal win in 2018.

The new plan focuses heavily on increasing equity within the community and fostering connections. "We are excited to see where this new plan takes the library, and more importantly, the community," adds Betcher.



## BE A CENSUS TAKER - HELP OUR COMMUNITY

What is the Census? As mandated by the U.S. Constitution, the census is a once-every-decade count of everyone living in the country.

What can you do to make a difference in our community? This year, the answer is easy. You can make a difference by participating in the 2020 Census.

Apply now to be considered for part-time census taker positions in Spring 2020. The Census Bureau is recruiting to hire about 500,000 temporary workers nationwide to help conduct the 2020 Census.

It's important for the Census to hire people in every community in order to have a complete and accurate census. Census data is used in decisions to distribute billions in federal funding and to determine our representation in Congress and the Legislature.

The pay rate for Olmsted County is up to \$25.00 per hour. Census workers are paid for training and work flexible hours. Earn extra money and benefit our community.

More job info and online job application:

[2020Census.gov/jobs](http://2020Census.gov/jobs)

For the Spanish version of job information and online application: [2020Census.gov/es/jobs](http://2020Census.gov/es/jobs)



## ROCHESTER READING CHAMPION CONTINUES TO SHINE

Three years ago, Jannelle graduated from the library's Rochester Reading Champions (RRC) program. As a second-grader, she struggled with reading and spelling when she started her one-on-one tutoring sessions.

Students, on average, improve their reading skills by 2 ½-grade levels upon completion of the program. However, Jannelle experienced even greater success, increasing her reading level by four grades.

In January, Jannelle was one of a handful of readers at this year's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Breakfast at the Mayo Civic Center in Rochester. She not only read aloud in front of a packed audience, but she also authored the piece that she read, a poem titled "Love is the Course of Life."



### LOVE IS THE COURSE OF LIFE Jannelle, Grade 6

Love is not only the length of life  
Love is the course of life

Love is a connection  
a course in happiness

Love is a sacrifice  
a course in compromise

Love is shared  
With yourself  
With your family  
With your neighbor

Love is found  
In kindness  
In generosity  
In friendliness

Love can be the solution  
To self discovery  
To rational thinking  
To inner peace

Love is not only the breadth of life  
Love is the course of life

## SPRING SEASON MEANS SEEDS

The Seed Library is now open, as gardeners across the region look forward to the upcoming growing season. The program launched in 2019 and Seed Library Coordinator, Keri Ostby, says it was even more successful than she expected. "I knew people would be excited about the opportunity to have access to free seeds, but our team didn't fully realize just how popular the program would be," says Ostby.



**8,500+**  
seed packets  
distributed in 2019

### NEW SEED TYPES FOR 2020

Thai Green Eggplant  
Halbhoher Gruner Krauser  
Kale  
Wisconsin Lakes Pepper

Japanese Giant Red Mustard  
Green  
Costata Romanesco Summer  
Squash  
San Marzano Tomato

## BIKES COMING SOON

Launching later this spring is the library's Bike Share program. Now heading into its third year, the RPL Bike Share program will resume as soon as the weather stays nice.



"We are shooting for a May launch, as long as Mother Nature cooperates," says Bike Share Coordinator Heather Adamson.

### 2019 BIKE SHARE STATS

**16** bikes added to the RPL collection, plus two ebikes  
**748** checkouts from May-November  
**418** people used the bikes  
**744** miles traveled by ebikes alone



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## WIT, WISDOM & WINE FUNDRAISER

Over 200 library supporters spent a warm February evening laughing, learning, and sipping wine at this year's "Wit, Wisdom, & Wine" event.

The premier annual fundraiser featuring local speakers raised over \$40,000 this year, to support library programs and services.

In its 19th year, "Wit, Wisdom, & Wine" became a more intimate event, as many of the spaces typically used were unavailable after last fall's water leak. Guests enjoyed presentations among stacks of books rather than being in some of the typical meeting spaces.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this event such a grand success, including our sponsors, donors, attendees, as well as the more than 40 volunteers who donated their time and talents. We could not have done it without you!



**Brenda Kardock**  
Rochester Public Library  
Foundation, Executive Director







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**APPRECIATION**

- Amelia Stobaugh  
*in appreciation of Challis L. Schultz*
- Aileen Williams  
*in appreciation of Grace Glover*
- Ms. Jacque Sourkes  
*In celebration of Wayne & Paulette Wojahn 50th Anniversary*

**IN HONOR**

- |                                                                                                          |                                                                                          |                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mr. D. Mike Miller<br><i>in honor of Amy Hamilton for her help with Genealogy</i>                        | Sandra Atkinson<br><i>in honor of Joan Atkinson</i>                                      | Anonymous<br><i>in honor of the Library Staff</i>                                                         |
| Maurice & Kaylene Geiger<br><i>in honor of Anita Bartel</i>                                              | Tina Liebling & Mark Liebow<br><i>in honor of Joseph &amp; Elizabeth Liebow</i>          | Jane & Mary Eliz Campion<br><i>in honor of the staff &amp; volunteers</i>                                 |
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| Judith Wasser<br><i>in honor of Janice Ulrich</i>                                                        | Al & Marj Newcomer<br><i>in honor of the Bethel Luthern Church Book Group, Rochester</i> |                                                                                                           |
| Ms. Lisa A Lundquist<br><i>in honor of Jim Pitcher/<br/>in memory of Lois Gardner &amp; Barb Moulton</i> | Brenda Kardock<br><i>in honor of the incredibly talented team at RPL</i>                 |                                                                                                           |

**IN MEMORY**

- |                                                          |                                                                      |                                                                                         |
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| Joan Elkins<br><i>in memory of Alice Olson</i>           | John & Kathleen Mazur<br><i>in memory of Francina Wilson</i>         |                                                                                         |

## ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Over 70 Friends' members attended the 2020 Annual Meeting Luncheon in January to conduct the organization's yearly business and provide a recap of 2019 highlights.

Some key facts and figures:

- Friends' members reviewed and donated \$185,303 worth of materials which were added to the library's collection or local mini-libraries
- The Friends' Book Store sold thousands of books and other items which provided \$75,000 to support library programs and services in 2019 and 2020
- Friends' Board Officers were nominated and approved: John Hunziker-President, Lou Wagner-Vice President, Joyce Wenz-Secretary, and Phillip Nordquist-Treasurer

Guest speaker Al Dollerschell also shared his collection of figurines and the stories behind them. Dollerschell picked up the items at various locations from around the world over the course of several years.



## SCHOLARSHIP MAKES IMPACT; PROGRAM RETURNS

When Michael Jones was awarded the first-ever Friends' Scholarship, he said he loved the work RPL does for the community, especially work to support LGBTQIA youth. One year later, Jones is continuing his employment at RPL, attending school at Rochester Community and Technical College (RCTC), and also volunteering with Rochester Pride.

"Before I received the Friends' Scholarship, I was genuinely worried that I would have to take a semester off to save up the money for my classes. Because of the award, I was able to keep on track with my program. I'll be graduating in June, and that wouldn't have been possible without the generosity of the Friends. I'm incredibly grateful."

The scholarship program continues to make an impact. This year the program will once again award a \$1,000 scholarship to any current part-time library employee.

Says Friends' Board President John Hunziker, "The scholarship program allows us to understand how the library impacts the lives of young people in our community, and also supports the education of a community member."



**FRIENDS** OF THE  
**Rochester**  
**Public Library**



## WINTERFEST BOOK SALE

Even with a powerful snowstorm, the Winterfest Book Sale was a resounding success! The Friends of the Library made \$6,967.57 in the February sale, making it the second-highest-grossing Winterfest sale of the last five years.

Missed this fabulous event? Mark your calendars for the four-day Rochesterfest Sale: June 22-June 25.

## FRIENDS' BOOK STORE HOURS

**MONDAY 10AM-7PM**  
**TUESDAY 10AM-4PM**  
**WEDNESDAY 10AM-7PM**  
**THURSDAY 10AM-7PM**  
**FRIDAY 10AM-4PM**  
**SATURDAY 10AM-1PM**  
**SUNDAY 1:30-4:30PM**





# Rochester Public Library

101 Second Street SE  
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## IT'S ALL FUN AND GAMES

The library now has a collection of board games available for checkout.

The games checkout for 2 weeks with your RPL library card and the selection is great.

In all there are 44 titles, including:

- Catan: Trade, Build, Settle
- Telestrations
- Sushi Go!
- Wingspan
- and more!

## LIBRARY HOURS

**MONDAY - THURSDAY**

9:30AM - 9:00PM

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY**

9:30AM - 5:30PM

**SUNDAY**

1:30 - 5:30PM

507.328.2300 | [www.rplmn.org](http://www.rplmn.org)

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Nicole Henry, Layout/Design

## DONATIONS BY THE SCOOP

The Rochester Public Library Foundation (RPLF) is teaming up with Cold Stone Creamery this April to dish up donations for the library!

A portion of the April sales from all three Rochester Cold Stone locations will be donated to the Foundation.

Want to do your part? Have a scoop at Cold Stone during the month of April and know that you've treated the library to some great support!



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