

# ANNUAL REPORT

## JANUARY 2025

Our mission at Decorah Public Library is to be an all-encompassing resource center that provides materials and programs for the leisure, entertainment and life-long learning of the citizens of Decorah and the Winneshiek County area.

**IN JUNE 2024, LIBRARY STAFF WRAPPED UP YEAR TWO AND BEGAN YEAR THREE OF A THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUSED ON ADVANCING THIS MISSION THROUGH FIVE MAIN THEMES:**

### 1. ENGAGING COMMUNITY

*Build a thriving library by building a thriving library community*  
In 2024, we facilitated our first for-credit internship experience in partnership with Luther College, expanded outreach efforts to local schools, forged new partnerships with local organizations (Sunflower, for example), worked with EARL Transit to provide transportation to library events for children living on the outskirts of town, and leveraged existing software to help us reach library users quickly with news about legislative happenings impacting libraries in Iowa.



### 2. EQUITABLE ACCESS

*Remove barriers to participating in the library*  
Library staff were awarded a \$10,000 grant from the American Library Association to replace aging automatic door openers on the exterior doors and add new openers to lower-level restrooms. Staff also received a grant from the Depot Outlet to kickstart a Spanish language collection for children and young adults. Additionally, staff created bilingual forms for new card applications, copier use instructions, and catalog notifications. We also launched a new website with a suite of accessibility features that provide tools for users to customize the site for their needs. The new website also features built-in translation functions for non-English speaking users. Sound equipment was purchased for off-site programs to accommodate participants with hearing impairment.



### 3. EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCES

*Provide opportunities for discovery, exploration, and transformation through innovative programs, services, and hospitality.*

In 2024, Winneshiek County residents created terrariums, touched sharks, made crafts while building community, biked on trails, watched movies during snow days, learned how to care for disabled adults, participated in over 60 book discussions, learned how to help intervene with someone considering suicide, shared original poems and stories, among many other things in programs last year. Residents participated in over 400 programs and attendance at adult programs increased by 35% over the previous year.



### 5. EMPOWERING STAFF

*Invest in individuals and teams that achieve organizational goals*

We have introduced new onboarding strategies and ongoing training for current staff. Our team has created training videos covering a variety of processes specific to Decorah Public Library's circulation staff to streamline training. A staff member was accepted into the Iowa Library Association leadership cohort. Another staff member presented at the Public Library Association conference and at a series of workshops around the state on the innovative work happening at DPL. Staff have received several additional invitations to submit presentation proposals at various state-level continuing education events and conferences in the future as well.



### 4. ENTICING SPACES

*Create dynamic physical and digital spaces that serve the needs of library users.*

Library staff completely overhauled several parts of the building to better serve the needs of library users. We rearranged the picture book collection to make it more browsable and easier for children and their parents to find things. We moved the young adult collection to make it easier for both teens and adults to find their next favorite title. We also rearranged the junior nonfiction collections to make them easier for children to browse and find the books they're interested in. Staff also worked with the Street Department to move the lower-level book drop in order to make it accessible via car. Library users have been universally appreciative of these changes.





# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULT DEPARTMENT

- Engaged new demographics with community-responsive programming, such as our teen book club, and an increased emphasis on bilingual marketing and program opportunities. We also received a grant from the Depot Outlet to purchase a new collection of Spanish children's books.
- Continued partnerships with Decorah Community School District teachers, visiting for monthly story times at John Cline and St. Ben's, and collaborating with Decorah High School on a book club. We have also been visiting ELL (English Language Learner) classes in Decorah Schools to share our new Spanish collection and to connect multilingual families with our resources.
- Collaborated with local organizations such as Upper Explorerland's Walking School Bus, ArtHaus, Driftless Yoga Center, Winneshiek County Conservation, and more.
- Mobile Outreach Booth visits to the School Lunch Club, John Cline's Meet the Parents Night, Earth Day events at the fairgrounds, Decorah Pride, and Lawn Chair Family Night.



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Andrea Beckendorf (President)
- Andrew Hageman (Vice President)
- Shanna Putnam Dibble (Co-Secretary, Rural Representative)
- Shannon Horton (Co-Secretary)
- Elliott Johnson
- Erick Kephart
- Maria Leitz
- Cheryl Pellet (Friends of DPL Liaison)
- Allie Scott







## STATISTICS

### Library Staff and Population Served

- Library staff: 22 (10.25 FTE)
- RSVP staff: 1 (1FTE)
- Library users: 8,446 (up 7%)

### Circulation

- 134,202

### Interlibrary Loan

- We lent 656 items to other libraries and borrowed 1,433 items for our library users

### Large Print Collection

- 13,669 items were checked out to local users, care facilities, and 103 libraries across the state

### Programming and Outreach

- 371 programs with 13,534 attendances

### Technology

- 26,084 internet sessions (public computers/wired and wireless combined) (up 28%)
- Usage of BRIDGES (free digital audio books and e-books) continues to increase; on average 626 library users checked out 33,970 items (10% increase in users)
- Two mobile hotspots were purchased to assist rural users with internet access from home; additional units will be added in the future, as they have proven extremely popular

[note: all statistics are from our official state reporting period, July 2023-June 2024]

## COMMUNITY SERVICES

- The Northeast Iowa Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) for which DPL serves as host and fiscal agent has grown to more than 690 volunteers; these volunteers meet critical community needs at 80+ nonprofit stations in a 3-county area (the majority in Winn. Co.). Volunteers served over 40,000 hours this year.
- Free meeting room space available for use by local nonprofits, civic organizations, and for educational purposes
- Certified Notary Public services available free of charge (Tues and Thur 10-11:30, by appointment)
- Long Distance Learning test proctoring available free of charge
- Local Public Access TV- the library runs the TV channel which assists local municipalities, schools, and nonprofits with publicizing local events and broadcasting programming (i.e. City Council meetings and local church services)

## FUNDING

- City of Decorah
- Winneshiek County
- Friends of Decorah Public Library
- State Library of Iowa
- Marion E. Jerome Foundation
- Joey Headington Memorial
- The Monday Club
- First United Methodist Church Trust
- Individual donors
- Grants