



DECORAH PUBLIC LIBRARY

Annual Report

JANUARY 2023

Kristin Torresdal, Director & Zach Row-Heyveld, Assistant Director

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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 July 2022, library staff enthusiastically launched a new 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 2022, we expanded our reach beyond the walls of the library by offering diverse programming and outreach in the county. Staff also created programs like Coffee + Creativity and Stroller Walks specifically designed to provide individuals and organizations opportunities to connect and build relationships with each other.



2 Equitable Access

Remove barriers to participating in the library

Library staff partnered with Iowa Workforce Development to conduct an accessibility audit of the building and will use that information to make the space more accessible to all county residents, regardless of physical or mental abilities. Staff also started ensuring website and social media posts are compatible with screen readers and other assistive technology. We offered one-on-one tech help sessions for library users who needed a hand setting up their device, and front-desk staff regularly help library users access e-books and audiobooks on their mobile devices.



3 Exceptional Experiences

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

In 2022, Winneshiek County residents grew oyster mushrooms, touched sharks, toured the fire station, biked on trails, learned about ax murders, shared food at potlucks, participated in over 60 book discussions, and made a huge number of crafts, among many other things. DPL program attendance and building traffic are both at five-year highs. In order to provide the best possible experience for library users, frontline staff have prioritized hospitality in their onboarding and training. Policies and procedures have also been evaluated from a "library user first" perspective to offer unparalleled service to the public.

"Beautiful space, great books, and a wonderful place to spend time or hang out when in town." - Jon

4 Enticing Spaces

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

From huge paper airplanes suspended above the bookshelves, to snowflakes around the building, library staff created fun, whimsical displays to keep the space changing with the seasons. Staff also created rotating book displays highlighting everything from cozy reads (in partnership with Inspire(d) magazine) to Mental Health Awareness Month. These curated displays help users find something new to read at their own pace.

The management team has been working on creating long range facilities maintenance and capital improvement plans that will guide future project and funding prioritization. Staff are also evaluating and overhauling the layout and traffic flow of the library building in order to most efficiently use the space to meet the needs of current and future library users and staff.

5 Empowering Staff

Invest in individuals and teams that achieve organizational goals

The management team has expanded continuing education requirements for all positions beyond what is required by either the City or the State, and have increased opportunities for all staff members to participate in continuing education events. Staff have also begun work on a cross-training program for multiple technical positions to ensure continuity of service for library users.

"So much to offer the children in the community as well as the adults. I love being able to get books on my tablet as well!" - Kathy



UPDATE FROM THE CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULT DEPARTMENT

Wow, what a year! After pivoting in 2021 to serve our community during building renovations, 2022 was a year of creating welcoming spaces, celebrating time together, and collaborating with folks throughout our community to offer one of our fullest, busiest, most well attended program schedules.

Some highlights include:

- Offering over 66 programs for more than 3,000 participants during our two-month summer reading program
- Presenting to almost 100 other librarians about our place-based and community centered work at “The Back in Circulation Again” conference
- Starting new library programs... including a Naturebrary program outdoors, monthly Baby Dance parties, summer books and hammocks hangouts, and fall process art in the park
- Bagging up take-and-make art and science projects for over 4,700 participants over the course of the calendar year
- Offering weekly family yoga throughout the summer and fall
- Co-hosting book clubs with the Decorah Home School Program, Decorah Middle School, and Decorah High School
- Hosting a skating party with Decorah Parks and Recreation and collaborating with them later in the year to offer kids who completed our summer reading challenge a free visit to the pool
- Hosting winter field trips with Winneshiek County Conservation and Upper Explorerland’s Safe Routes to School—which offered kids the opportunity to explore their communities, try cross country skiing and ice skating, and connect with library staff
- Outreach visits to the School Lunch Club and John Cline’s Meet the Parents Night
- Having our biking field trip program (that we co-host with Upper Explorerland’s Safe Routes to School) featured on The League of American Bicyclists’s website
- Deepening our relationship with our community, implementing community feedback and collaborating with city, county, and regional organizations to offer kids and families exceptional library experiences



STATISTICS

Library Staff and Population Served:

- Library staff: 14 (10.68 FTE)
- RSVP staff: 2 (1.4 FTE)
- Library users: 7,274 (up 7% from last year)

Circulation:

- 122,689 (up 28% from last year)

Interlibrary Loan:

- We lent 738 items to other libraries and borrowed 794 items for our patrons

Large Print Collection:

- 16,679 items were checked out to local patrons, care facilities, and 106 libraries across the state

Programming and Outreach:

- 330 programs (up 25% from last year) with 10,260 attendances (up 55% from last year)

Technology:

- 15,200 internet sessions (public computers/wired and wireless combined)
- Usage of BRIDGES (free digital audio books and e-books) continues to increase- on average 508 library users checked out nearly 2704 items per month (4% circulation increase)

*"This is the best library I've ever been to"
- Mary, who recently moved to Decorah*

Community Services:

- The Northeast Iowa Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) for which DPL serves as host and fiscal agent has grown to more than 600 volunteers; these volunteers meet critical community needs at 70 nonprofit stations in a 3-county area (the majority in Winn. Co.). Volunteers served over 32,000 hours this year.
- Certified Notary Public services available free of charge (Mon-Fri 8-5, 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
- First United Methodist Church Trust
- Individual donors

