

# ANNUAL REPORT 2015



Anoka County  
LIBRARY

Ideas, Information, Inspiration.

## LIBRARIES TRANSFORM

Because  
libraries make  
a difference  
in their  
communities.

## Anoka County Library Transforms Lives

In this digital age, Anoka County Library continues to play a vital role in the educational and cultural life of our community, providing a place for people to connect, learn, and grow—to transform. While information delivery methods have changed over the years, our mission to connect people to ideas, information, and inspiration remains.

From young families building friendships in storytimes to entrepreneurs developing business plans with SCORE counselors, from seniors learning computer skills to communicate with grandchildren to kids building coding skills at Minecraft programs, Anoka County Library is a place of personal transformation. People visit the library to read, research, meet friends and colleagues, attend lectures, look for a job, or find a place of rest in a busy world. Anoka County Library is a place of infinite possibilities. As you read through the 2015 annual report, I hope the stories spark possibilities for you.

Anoka County Library's achievements are made possible by our many supporters, dedicated staff, tireless volunteers, a committed Library Board, and Anoka County Board of Commissioners. I would especially like to thank Marlene Moulton Janssen who, after 10 years of service as Library Director, retired in December. She was a tireless advocate for readers, learners, and libraries.

Finally, Dear Readers, the people who use our libraries every day, thank you. Because of you, Anoka County Library transforms lives.

With gratitude,



Maggie Snow

Anoka County Library Director



In order to achieve her dream of finding a new job, Amy Plemel had a goal of successfully completing her GED by August of 2015. Amy worked closely with Metro North Adult Basic Education on her path to success and took advantage of the Health Care Pathways Program, a collaborative program between Metro North ABE, Anoka-Hennepin Technical College, ARCC and the Anoka County Workforce Center.

Computer Sessions 108,942  
92,315 hours  
Wi-Fi Sessions 149,575

Without a computer at home, Amy found the support and space she needed to help achieve her goal at the Crooked Lake Library. Access to the internet and help from library staff in locating resources like GED books and online tools such as Learning Express allowed her to practice taking the GED. Over the

summer Amy visited the library nearly every day, “I finished with school around 1:00 p.m., went to the library, and stayed until my kids were going to be home.” Amy found the library to be the right environment to concentrate on her work. She also received the support she needed from library staff to develop skills like using Google Docs and creating an email account. Crooked Lake Library Branch Manager, Stacey Hendren said, “Amy and I checked in with each other regularly. Sometimes she needed help with a specific skill or resource and sometimes I just cheered her on.”

Since completing her GED, Amy has received her CNA and PCA certificates and has started work as a home health aide. Amy is proud of what she has accomplished this year, “For the first time in I don’t know how long, I am on track.”

Because  
while getting  
on track, the  
path is not  
always clear.



Because  
creativity  
is good for  
business.



Rumriver Art Center, a local non-profit, raised their exposure, built their business, and connected with a larger audience through a creative partnership with the library.

The Young at Art program series, funded by the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, introduces students to new artists, artistic methods, and art history. They explore everything from Pokémon in polymer clay to Leonardo da Vinci with pencil and coffee. They utilize new mediums and materials, such as sea glass, mosaics, and acrylic paint. Artwork created by Rumriver students is often exhibited at the Rum River Library in Anoka.

The partnership between Rumriver Art Center and Anoka County Library has increased arts awareness and audiences for both organizations. Director Larry Weinberg and staff from Rumriver share their passion for art with students that may not have otherwise been reached and in turn, the center's customers have been able to see the library as a community resource for ideas and inspiration.

When Anoka County librarians plan for a storytime, they hope children and their parents or caregivers enjoy great stories and learn something new but not just at the library. Librarians know that parents and caregivers are a child's first and best teachers so they plan storytimes with parents in mind. Early literacy tips to use at home and incorporate into daily life are a vital part of each storytime.

20,141 people  
attended  
969 storytimes

Librarians from Anoka County Library participated in a national training effort, Supercharged Storytime, which allowed them to share early literacy tips with librarians from across the country. Energized by this collaborative sharing of ideas they have been more inspired than ever to get the word out about energizing activities parents and caregivers can use at home to build early literacy skills.

Librarians love to hear stories about how families are incorporating early literacy practices at home. Becky

Walpole, branch librarian at the St Francis Library, was delighted to hear a family had continued the fun of a rhyming song "Am I blue?" after they



left the library. The family sang the song together rhyming different words with blue then switched it up to rhyme with other colors. Playing with rhymes is a great way for children to learn the smaller parts of words and singing together makes those smaller parts easier to identify. Early literacy skills are essential building blocks children need to learn before they are ready to read or write. Storytimes at Anoka County Library support parents and caregivers as they prepare their children for that important step.

Because  
you are your  
child's first and  
best teacher.



Because  
Facebook photos  
of your grandkids  
are worth learning  
something new.

Librarians have been partnering with senior centers across Anoka County to connect older adults with library services, offering everything from technology classes to help downloading eBooks to book clubs and songwriting classes. Toting along a laptop lab, librarians offer help with computer basics, navigating the internet, creating email accounts, learning social media, and using library databases. Senior Center visitors can make appointments with a librarian to learn how to download free eBooks to their device

or meet with others in their community for a book discussion and recommendations for what to read next. Visits from a librarian to senior centers have inspired many to rediscover what the library has to offer. Classes and individualized help are opening new doors to technology for older adults in Anoka County. After learning how to download eBooks, one senior center visitor commented, “I am going to have fun with this!”

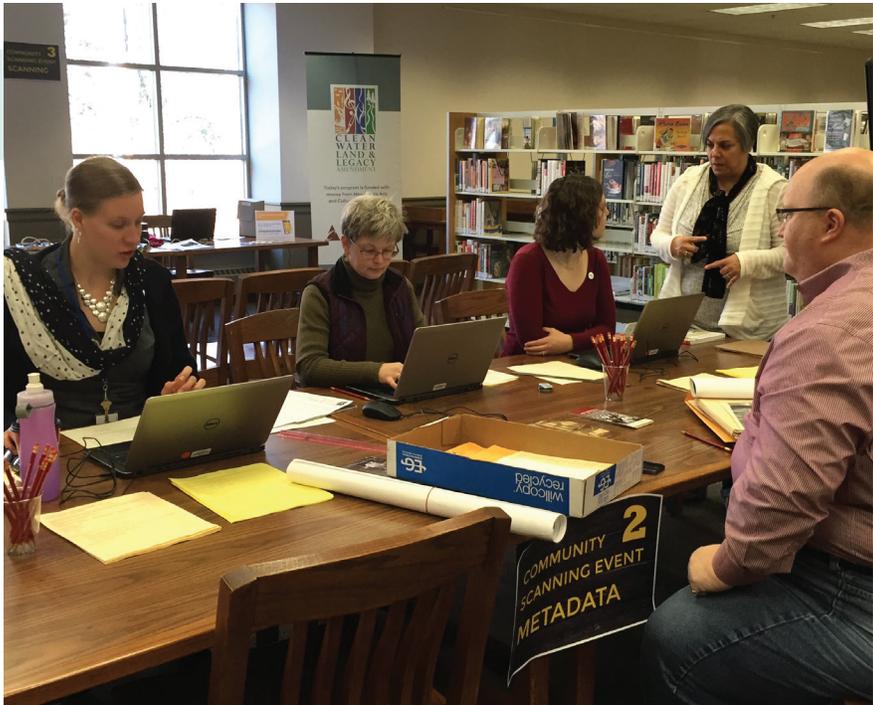
222 Outreach workshops  
7,301 attendees

Digital Preservation Days are a great opportunity to tell our community’s story by sharing a bit of your own. Sponsored by Anoka County Library in partnership with the Anoka County Historical Society (ACHS), residents connected with digitization experts from the Minnesota Digital Library. Patrons left with a high quality scan of their photos on a flash drive and benefited from the process of talking through questions about what was known about each photo. This “metadata” was preserved alongside the photos and will serve as a record for generations to come. Images and other materials were added to the Anoka County Historical Society collection.

Because we are all part of the same story.

41,077 people attended 2,146 programs

Digitization efforts came from a natural tendency for patrons to bring their own amazing stories, photos and artifacts related to the topics of the popular “Bringing Local History to Life” lectures. Lynda attended the presentation on the “History of Blaine.” Her family lived for generations in one of the first homes built in the community and she was surprised to discover her family photos filled holes in the ACHS collection. Lynda was moved to learn of her family’s important place in the history of our community which led to a real sense of connection to the place she has called home for over 50 years.





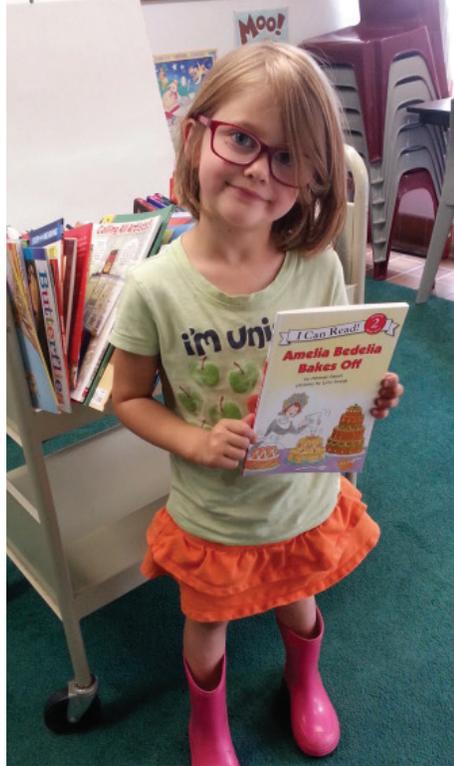
Because reading for fun makes good things happen (like increased vocabulary, comprehension, grammar and writing skills).

Reading for fun is one of the best activities to provide the foundational language and literacy skills kids need to succeed. Anoka County Library's summer library experience, Bookawocky, engages kids in reading and learning in a welcoming environment.

Over the summer, librarians encouraged young readers to dig into books and to learn something new in a variety of ways. All summer long, kids and teens submit reviews of each book they read.

Performances by musicians, magicians and comedians provide family fun, expose kids to new experiences and share a reminder to keep reading over the summer. Songwriting workshops are a unique way for kids to play with language and learn how to work with others. Taking a StoryWalk® provides an opportunity for children and families to read a picture book as they enjoy a walk in the great outdoors. Book clubs give young readers a chance to share what they are reading. Participating in a book discussion and learning experiences related to stories help to develop reading comprehension skills and a lifelong love of reading.

18,061 book reviews reviewed by kids



Volunteer Teen STEM Educators engaged budding scientists in exciting science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) activities at many Anoka County Library locations. STEM activities spark an interest in math and science among younger kids and provide a great opportunity for teens to apply their knowledge while building critical leadership skills. One parent commented on how valuable the experience was for her son, “From a developmental standpoint, giving him this opportunity to practice job skills and leadership is great .”



Over the summer of 2015, 17 volunteers led 41 events attended by 353 kids.

Because engaging kids with STEM means a brighter future for us all.



Gail Liljebald, a longtime resident of Lino Lakes, has always been an avid library user enjoying reading whenever her schedule allows. Recently, after discovering the Books and Beyond class at the Centennial Library, she decided she wanted to explore new technology and eBooks.

**315,606 digital downloads**  
(eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines)

“I was a little slow to start because I love actual books and holding a book, but after learning about how easy it is to use the technology, I was hooked. The tablet I use is just as convenient, if not more, to read books on. I take it everywhere with me. After taking the class at the library, I went home to read the book I learned to download and my husband had to finally tell me go to bed. I didn’t want to stop -- I was so excited.”

Because  
eBooks are  
perfect for late  
night reading.

Gail also didn’t realize the library offered technology classes and she is looking forward to coming back and learning more.

“I feel at home at the library. The staff at Centennial is so welcoming. It is easier for me to learn when I feel comfortable. The one-on-one teaching is great. I know I can come in with questions and will be able to get the help I need. I hope everyone can have the experience I have.”



Members of the community surrounding the Crooked Lake Library in Coon Rapids gather every month to discuss books with their neighbors. Staff at the Crooked Lake Library started a book club for adults in April of 2015. The titles for each six-month session are voted on by interested patrons from a list of about fifty titles provided by library staff. Patrons are invited to attend as they are able on the third Monday of each month. New attendees are always welcome and there is no registration required. Participants say they enjoy the variety of book options presented to them and the chance to read outside of their comfort zones. Friendships are forming between community members who met at the library, and conversations about literary themes and character motivation keep book club members looking forward to the next great read.

Because  
bonding over  
books builds  
community.

Anoka County Library also supports community book clubs through Book Club in a Bag. Over 100 bags containing eight copies of one title, meant to distribute to a book club, are available to check out with a library card. New this year, some bags contain two copies in large print.

In 2015 Anoka County Library brought together partners from the Anoka County Workforce Center (WFC) and Metro North Adult Basic Education (ABE) to help guests at Stepping Stone Emergency Housing (SSEH) end their homelessness. Step into Action offers training and resources to unemployed or underemployed guests of Stepping Stone who are working toward finding employment and housing.

Because moving out of homelessness happens one step at a time.



Metro North ABE's trained assessment coordinators visit Stepping Stone to measure guests' reading and math proficiency to help them better plan future education goals. Anoka County WFC staff teach a curriculum that focuses on job searches, resume writing, interviewing and job retention.

Librarians from Anoka County Library continue to offer weekly outreach services to SSEH guests to familiarize them with library services and provide training in the use of technology and the library's online resources. The library also provides eReaders and a collection of books which are available to check out. Librarians are seeing real transformation occurring in the lives of SSEH guests through these visits. Matthew has diligently been improving his typing skills and is extremely motivated to complete his GED. A guest whose first language was Vietnamese used Transparent Language, a library language database, to practice his English language skills. Rose was able to reconnect with her family and gain confidence with new technology after learning how to use Facebook.

"This program gives Stepping Stone guests the tools they need to continue on a path to success and self-sufficiency once they move out," said Anoka County Commissioner Julie Braastad.



Anoka County's Library and Job Training Center partnered to offer a student a job training opportunity at the Mississippi Library. Branch Manager, Shannon Melham, worked closely with Kristine Yost, the Job Training Center Employment Representative, to make this a positive experience for the student, staff, and library patrons.

Sarah Abbood, a junior at Fridley High School, participated in the 2015 TANF Youth Innovation Program. She worked closely with Shannon and Kristine to determine goals she would like to achieve through the program. The goals Sarah identified included improving her English, working with children and developing marketable skills through her experience at the Mississippi Library.

Sarah was a valuable asset to the Mississippi Library by shelving materials, working on special projects, and providing assistance at classes and events. Sarah enjoyed working with children at the library programs. Sarah's long term goals are to continue expanding her skills working with children, becoming more proficient in her English, and to attend college after she graduates from high school.

Because  
job skills are  
built when  
learning is put  
into practice.



**friend** (noun) \ ˈfrend \ : a person who helps or supports someone or something (such as a cause or charity)

The Friends of the Anoka County Library are friends indeed. The Friends support Anoka County Library programs through fundraising and spread the word about how important libraries are to the Anoka County residents. Carol Schaffer, Friends of the Anoka County Library President, became part of the organization due to her love of libraries growing up. “My mother was a teacher and she instilled the importance of books in us. We would bring stacks of books home from our town Carnegie Library, we couldn’t read enough. I feel that being on the Friends board is a great way to continue that support. I enjoy giving back to my community.”

One of The Friends most successful fundraising events is the indoor mini golf and silent auction held in March at the Rum River Library. At this year’s event a very surprised 10-year-old participant had no idea he would find such a fun activity at his local library. He was overheard saying “You never know what might show up at the library!”

The Friends of the Anoka County Library continue to look for innovative ways to support library programs and new members are always welcome.

Because everyone needs a Friend.



Meeting rooms are available at most Anoka County libraries for groups to come together, learn, and exchange information and ideas. Community groups like the Silver Lane Machine Quilters who use the Centennial Library meeting room for their monthly gatherings find the space very useful. Library meeting rooms provide space for organizations to hold annual meetings, for crafters to share ideas and one was even the site of a wedding in 2015 when the couple's venue fell through at the last minute.

2,671 Public Meetings

Conference rooms are available at the Northtown and Rum River libraries for small groups, tutors, and other individuals looking for a private place to work. Tutors find the space and available materials like whiteboards useful for teaching and the private rooms help students to focus. Library staff and volunteers also use conference rooms for individual technology instruction. Others take advantage of the space, and free wireless access, and wireless printing available in all library buildings to do their work or to study.

Because ideas need room to grow.

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## Anoka County Library

707 County Road 10 NE, Blaine, MN 55434-2398 phone 763-785-3695  
anokacountylibrary.org

### PUBLIC SERVICE

Circulation 2,520,740  
Visits 1,720,108  
Library Visits 893,015  
Mobile Visits 827,166  
Classes & Events 2,146  
Attendance 41,077  
Annual Open Hours 17,508  
Anoka County resident cardholders 256,202  
Reciprocal users 33,745

### OPERATING BUDGET

Revenue \$7,745,521  
Anoka County 89%  
Regional Library and State 10%  
Friends/Gifts/Grants 1%

Expenditures \$7,365,538  
Staff 64%  
Collections 12%  
Operations 18%  
Other 6%

### 2015 LIBRARY BOARD

Ellen Ward, Anoka  
Melanie Keister, Blaine  
Dan Greensweig, Circle Pines  
Bob Thistle, Coon Rapids  
Linda Backlund, Fridley  
Cathy Montain, Ham Lake  
Rob Schiller, Nowthen

### 2015 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

District 1 - Matt Look  
District 2 - Julie Braastad  
District 3 - Robyn West  
District 4 - Jim Kordiak  
District 5 - Mike Gamache  
District 6 - Rhonda Sivarajah  
District 7 - Scott Schulte



Volunteer Hours 5,789

Volunteers who give their time to benefit others transform communities. Without the help of wonderful volunteers the library would not be able to do the work we do to transform lives. We are grateful for the dedication and skill of volunteers who do everything from shelving books to helping with children's programs to teaching technology skills.

LIBRARIES  
TRANSFORM

Because

Anoka County Library...  
is your connection to  
ideas, information, and inspiration.