



The Next Chapter



Newsletter of the Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation

To show support for library

Advocacy Committee plans Town Hall meeting

A newly formed Advocacy Committee is working to spread the message that “a strong library equals a strong community” as it seeks to strengthen support for the Cedar Rapids library prior to next year’s city budget process.

The group includes representatives of the library’s Board of Trustees, the CRPL Foundation Board, and the Friends of the Library Board, with leadership

provided by Susan Corrigan, Chris Schuety and Rochelle Holcomb.



*Susan
Corrigan*

“We recognized that we needed to have a group working to better advocate for the library


and engage the community in showing support for the library,” Corrigan says.

Members of the committee have been meeting with public officials including the city manager, mayor and city council members. “We’re doing research to better understand the funding situation for the city and how the library is valued in the community,” Corrigan explains.

In November, the group held an Action Planning Rally to build support for a community-wide Town Hall meeting focused on the library, scheduled for 7 p.m., Monday, January 7, at First Presbyterian Church.

The objective of the Town Hall meeting will be to encourage the

Council to make the library a city funding priority, Corrigan explains. “We will discuss the value of the library in the community, our circulation and trends, and hear testimonials from users of the library. Public officials will then have the opportunity to speak and engage with the audience.”

Corrigan urges library supporters to attend the meeting and invite others to join them. “My favorite quote is from Gandhi – ‘Be the change you want to see in the world.’ Now is the time we need to be the change we want to see.” For suggestions on other ways to help support the work of the Advocacy Committee, see page 3. 



Library supporters gathered on November 26 to plan a January 7 Town Hall meeting where members of the community will have an opportunity to discuss the library’s future funding with public officials.

How does the CRPL stack up?

According to a fiscal year 2006 comparison of Midwest libraries in similar-sized communities, the Cedar Rapids Public Library (CRPL) has fallen below norms in several critical measures of support and vitality. A few statistics:

Library holdings per capita:

Mean = 3.32

CRPL = 2.40

Staff full-time equivalents:

Mean = 79.05


CRPL = 57.19

Operating expenditure per capita:

Mean = 48.34

CRPL = 32.53

The CRPL is also below the mean in several categories in comparison with other Iowa libraries.

In the staffing area, it’s noteworthy that the CRPL has lost the equivalent of 14.8 full-time staff members between 1999 and 2007 – amounting to nearly 23 percent of the library staff. 

Show your support !

What: Town Hall Meeting & Rally for Library

When: Monday, January 7, 7 p.m.

Where: First Presbyterian Church, 310 5th St. SE
(across from Greene Square)



*Foundation
Board of Directors*

Officers:

Joan Thaler,
President
Diane Bergstrom,
Vice President
Todd Kerska,
Treasurer
Chris Schuety,
Secretary

Directors:

Susan Corrigan
Doug Elliott
Tom Hansen
Tim Hill
Judy Leavitt
Christine Tabak
Brian Wakeham

*Foundation
Contact Information*

Marie DeVries,
Director
739-0411
Fax: 398-0476
Email:
devriesm@crlibrary.org

*Cedar Rapids
Public Library*

Board of Trustees:

Tim Hill, President
Susan Corrigan,
Vice President
Doug Elliott
Maureen Engle
Joe Lock
Susan McDermott
Dennis McMenimen
Nancy Shey

Staff:

Lori Barkema,
Director
Tamara Glise,
Assistant Director

Library website
www.crlibrary.org



OUR MISSION

The Cedar Rapids Public Library Foundation enhances the quality of the Cedar Rapids Public Library services to the community by securing resources to support library programs and projects not normally met by public funding.

Library leader challenges citizens to act on behalf of community

Tim Hill, president of the CRPL Board of Trustees and a trustee representative on the Foundation Board, admits he's impatient.

"This city needs help. People need to stop talking and start doing," he stresses, and a high-quality library system should be one of the community's most urgent concerns.

Hill remembers his father and grandmother taking him to the Kenwood branch library for story hour and to check out books. "During high school and college I used both the Kenwood and downtown libraries, and all through law school I did a lot of my work in libraries."

A graduate of Regis High School, the University of Iowa and the University of Virginia Law School, Hill spent eight years practicing law in Chicago before he returned to Cedar Rapids with his wife and young son in 1998 to become an attorney at Bradley & Riley PC.

"I came back for the quality of life," he says. "I wanted to spend more time parenting." Hill and his Chicago-born wife Katie have two children, Frank, age 11, and Jane, age 8, as well as four dogs, three cats and four birds. Coaching his children's sports teams is among his favorite activities.

Hill has also been involved with several local civic organizations and

accepted gladly when former Mayor Pate appointed him to the CR Library Board of Trustees in 2004.

"My education has really been done in libraries, and I like being able to give back to an institution that helped me. On the macro level, I want to make sure the library is serving the community 25 years from now.

"If you ask, "What are the necessary things that every community should have?," at the top of the list should be equal and open access to all information, not just for those who can buy it. It's as important as schools, streets, fire and police."

The downtown library has served for 20 years without a significant update, he notes, while the Westside branch has insufficient space to meet the needs of a growing area of town.

"Further budget cuts would translate into lost staff and fewer hours of service, and that would take us from an A-rated library to a C-rated library. Is that where we want Cedar Rapids to be? Our collection size and the money spent on the library are already way below average.

"Libraries enhance not only cultural but economic vitality," he emphasizes. "Enhancing the downtown library and developing a thriving Westside branch would be a step in the right direction." ▀



For Tim Hill (center), who loves coaching his son's basketball team, a vital public library is essential to a healthy community.

What can you do to help maintain funding for the library?

Here are a few suggestions from the CRPL Advocacy Committee:

- Tell the City Council you value your library and want to upgrade the collection and continue to improve services and programs. Contact them at:
brian.fagan@cedar-rapids.org
tom.podzimek@cedar-rapids.org
pat.shey@cedar-rapids.org
kris.gulick@cedar-rapids.org
monica.vernon@cedar-rapids.org (beginning in January)
jerry.mcgrane@cedar-rapids.org
chuck.wieneke@cedar-rapids.org (beginning in January)
justin.shields@cedar-rapids.org
- Take your family to the library for children's and adult programming, books, DVDs, computers and more.
- Make a donation, bequest or other tax-deductible gift to the CRPL Foundation, 500 First St. SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52401-2002.
- Talk about the library with your friends and neighbors at your book group, social club or even at the game.
- Become a Friend of the Library. Individual memberships start at \$10; checks can be mailed to: Friends, Cedar Rapids Public Library, 500 First St. SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52401. 📖

Broadening the CRPL's perspectives on Asia

The library's collection of materials dealing with Asia has grown stronger, thanks to a \$600 grant award facilitated by the Rockwell Collins Friends of Asia Employee Network, a group of 325 Rockwell employees with origins in that region of the world.

One of the group's goals is to build stronger relationships among Rockwell employees and with members of the community through greater understanding of Asian cultures, says Friends of Asia Steering Committee member Niv Roy Ghatak, Manager of Strategic Alliances at Rockwell.

"The funds were used for purchasing books and materials related to Asia. We are very excited about the list of materials created by the library staff. I hope people use them, especially if they are traveling to India or Asia, and I hope kids can learn about other cultures as well." 📖



The Rockwell Collins Friends of Asia Employee Network Steering Committee includes (left to right) Niv Roy Ghatak, Sanjeev Mudhaliar, Reetika Bhandari, Abhinav Jain, Ved Tiwari, Tommy Lee, and Swati Jain.

Practicing my elevator speech

In addition to writing a will these past months – a topic covered in this column previously – I've also been working on my elevator speech. That's the one where you summarize in one or two minutes why the public library is important to your listener and critical to the community at large. It comes in handy whenever time is limited.

Here are statements I'm considering including in my speech – most of them stolen:

The internet will not replace public libraries because its primary use is entertainment, not education. The net is clogged with ads, promotions, games and other non-educational stuff.

The public library levels the playing field. Libraries provide resources and services that help people of all incomes learn to read, use computers and develop other skills needed to succeed. If you can get to a public library, you can reach the Internet.

Libraries are great places for kids. Picture books, story hour, summer reading. Kids get their own library card and borrow books, movies, music and games. They learn the thrill – and responsibility – of having their own "charge card."

Libraries are the great American bargain. The cost to taxpayers is a fraction of their total tax bill, yet yields invaluable opportunities.

Libraries are essential to a free people. They protect our right to know by providing access to a full spectrum of ideas, resources and services. Admission is free; no questions asked.

This is not an exhaustive list, but remember, it's an elevator speech. Help.

What would you include? Contact me at devriesm@cr-library.org, 739-0411, or 500 First St. SE. 📖



Marie DeVries
CRPL Library
Foundation Director

**Between
the
Lines**

Recognition for a faithful friend

Outgoing CRPL Foundation Board President Joan Thaler received the Benjamin Franklin Award from the Association for Fundraising Professionals on Philanthropy Day, November 15, in recognition of her many years of dedicated service to the Cedar Rapids Public Library and numerous other community organizations. A mental health therapist, Thaler volunteers as a therapist at the Community Health Free Clinic and contributes time and support to many local organizations, including the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Trees Forever, and all three local colleges. She has hosted events for the library, assisted with children's activities, donated artworks for use in fundraising and encouraged support for the library among patrons and the broader community. Congratulations, Joan, and thank you for being a wonderful friend to the Cedar Rapids Public Library! 📖



Joan Thaler has donated her service and support to the CRPL and many other local organizations.

Read about *Staff Picks* online

For the past three years, visitors to the library have been able to learn about books and other media recommended by library staff members by viewing the prominent *Staff Picks* display near the library entrance. Now you can have that information delivered directly to your computer via the *Staff Picks* electronic newsletter.

Through the *Staff Picks* project, funded by the Foundation's Staff Endowed Fund, staff members are encouraged to submit their favorite book, music or movie titles along with short recommendations. A *Staff Picks* Committee reviews the choices and rotates four new titles into the display each week.

The new opt-in newsletter – also updated every week or two – includes the title, author information and cover picture for each recommended item, along with the recommending staff person's name and review. The electronic newsletter also provides a link to the library's iBistro online catalog entry for each item.

To view the newsletter on the library's website, go to www.crlibrary.org, click on Library Services and click on Staff Picks. To subscribe, click on Book News (also under Library Services), check the Staff Picks box, and insert your e-mail address. 📖



Cedar Rapids Public Library
FOUNDATION

500 First Street S.E.
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
CEDAR RAPIDS, IA
PERMIT NO. 381