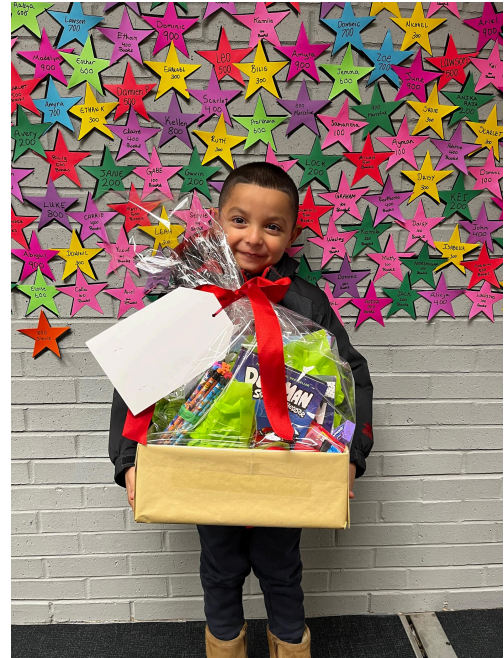


## Executive Director's Report DECEMBER 2024

### Grand Reopening of Our Youth Services Department

On December 2, we hosted a fantastic Grand Reopening celebration for our Youth Services Department! A huge thank you to Special Services Director Jessica Van Swol and the entire YS team for their incredible work in preparing the space for this special event. Over the course of two hours, we welcomed approximately 250 guests who enjoyed a variety of fun activities, including a scavenger hunt, games, raffles, storytime, a dance room, a photo op, and cake! We've heard nothing but positive feedback from attendees.

The newly revamped Imagination Zone has quickly become a favorite, sparking creative play and discovery for our young patrons. Pictured here is one of our appreciative raffle winners — thank you to everyone who joined us in celebrating this exciting milestone!



### Final Release of Bequest Funds from Ms. Joyce A. Mackert Secured

It has taken over a year since we first learned that the library was receiving bequest funds from Ms. Joyce A. Mackert, a contribution for which we are profoundly grateful. The process was significantly delayed by Ameriprise, the institution holding two of Ms. Mackert's IRAs. Their documentation requirements were extensive, but with persistence and the guidance of our attorney, Roger Ritzman, we were finally able to secure the full release of the bequest funds. **The library recently received three final checks from Ameriprise in the amounts of \$122,140.35, \$63.08, and \$27,054.56, with the last check dated December 9, 2024.** Combined with the initial bequest check of \$464,424.73, received on December 14, 2023, **the total generous donation from Ms. Mackert now amounts to \$613,682.72.**

Looking ahead to 2025, the library has allocated a portion of the bequest to a new "Strategic Priorities" budget category, enabling us to respond flexibly and effectively to emerging needs identified in the strategic planning process. This approach will ensure Ms. Mackert's generosity makes a lasting impact on the library and community.

Executive Director Jack Bower will also recommend, in the coming months, establishing a dedicated "Bequest Fund" to house this money, ensuring clear oversight and tracking while preserving the integrity of Ms. Mackert's generous gift.

### **District 214 Retirees Association Donates \$500 to the Library**

In December, we received a generous \$500 donation from the District 214 Retirees Association. As they transition their group, they chose to donate \$500 to each library serving District 214 in the final months of 2024. President Norm Holler personally delivered the check and posed for a photo during his visit. We are very appreciative of their thoughtfulness and generosity.



### **Wrap It Up: Festive and Eco-Friendly Holiday Gift Wrapping**

This holiday season, the Readers' Services introduced Wrap It Up: Holiday Gift Wrapping at the Library, designed to provide a festive space for patrons to wrap their holiday gifts. Visitors of all ages were encouraged to stop by the Reader Services desk to access the dedicated gift-wrapping station, stocked with all the necessary supplies, including primarily recycled and donated wrapping paper and materials. As an added convenience, a cart was available for patrons to transport wrapped gifts to and from their cars. In addition to spreading holiday cheer, the program also encouraged eco-friendly practices, aligning with its message of recycling and supporting greener choices during the festive season.



### **Exploring Privacy Enhancements for Patron Computer Use**

To further support patron privacy, the library is testing a privacy screen filter on one of the public computer stations. These screens reduce visibility from side angles, ensuring only the user directly in front of the monitor can clearly view the content, which can be especially helpful for patrons handling sensitive information or working on personal tasks. During this trial period, the library will monitor computer usage statistics to assess whether the screen enhances patron comfort and determine whether to expand privacy screens to additional computer stations.



### **Teen Study Sessions Offer Quiet Space and Support for Finals Prep**

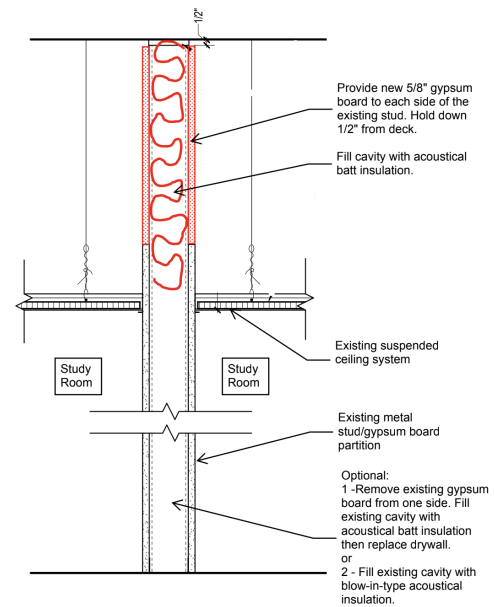
The library was pleased to announce another new program: Teen Study Sessions for High School Students. From December 17 to 19, the library invited all Fremd and Rolling Meadows High School students to take advantage of the quiet space in the Teen Area for focused study time as they prepared for finals. Teens could stop by Readers Services to check in and grab some snacks and drinks to stay fueled while they studied. Students just needed to bring their books and focus.



### **Improving Noise Isolation in Study Rooms**

This past year, we repurposed former staff spaces into what are now known as Study Rooms 3 and 4, expanding our options for patrons. After receiving feedback about sound bleed between the rooms, which sometimes made it difficult for users to focus, we consulted with DLA Architects for a solution. They provided a plan to improve noise isolation, and our Director of Facilities, Pete DeCicco, coordinated the project, securing contractors to install insulation between the rooms.

The results have already been noticed by our patrons, one written comment we received reads: “Thanks a lot RMLIB for: 1) Installing Coat hooks in Room 1 and 2 2) Installing Insulation for sound proof wall in room 3 and 4 3) Ensuring Strict quiet zone teen studying program last week. I am proud of my RMLIB.” Study rooms are one of our most popular services, and we’re committed to making them as functional as possible for our patrons.



### **Flavorful Kitchen Escapades Launches with Sumac**

Reference Librarian Lauren V. hosted the inaugural meeting of Flavorful Kitchen Escapades, a new spice-focused club at the library. This month's featured spice was sumac. Participants were invited to pick up a spice kit, which included a sample of sumac, cookbooks, and a curated bibliography for culinary inspiration. After experimenting with the spice in their own kitchens, attendees returned to share their experiences, recipes, and insights, making for a flavorful and engaging discussion.



### **Gift of Reading Display**

Readers Services created a festive “Give Yourself the Gift of Reading” display around the desk, showcasing lesser-known new fiction titles. Each book was gift-wrapped to conceal its cover and labeled with playful genre appeal descriptions like, “To the romantic who loves quirky characters and happy endings,” sparking curiosity among patrons. A note on each book encouraged readers not to unwrap it “until leaving the library,” adding to the festive mystery while inspiring patrons to explore new reads they might have otherwise overlooked.



### **2025 Staff Pay Increases**

In December, the administrative team implemented staff pay increases effective January 5, 2025. As outlined in the approved budget, all staff received a baseline 3% increase (except for those already above their position's pay range, who will receive a non-base bonus instead). An additional 1% of the pay budget was allocated for further benchmarking adjustments, continuing the ongoing pay equity project that began in late 2023.

Along with the pay increases, the administrative team prepared personalized benefit summaries for each staff member. These summaries detailed their benefits and associated costs, offering a



helpful reminder of the full range of compensation, including paid time off and the significant expenses the library covers, such as FICA taxes, IMRF contributions, and insurance, which is especially substantial for full-time staff.

## **In the Community**

### **Continuing Outreach Success**

Outreach efforts continue to thrive at the Neighborhood Resource Center and with the BPAC (Bilingual Parents Advisory Committee). During a recent event, Community Relations Manager Laura G. successfully signed up 60 readers for our Winter Reading Challenge, helping to engage more families in library programs and encourage literacy.

## **Department Highlights**

### **Youth Services**

Programming continued to take center stage with the Winter Reading Challenge, Junior Picassos, Coding Club Cookie Decorating, and Cuentos en Pijama. The Middle School Advisory Board worked together to create cozy blankets to be donated.



### **Readers Services**

- On December 6, Director of Readers Services Mary Constance Back attended the Readers Advisory Conference, ARRTcon 2024, at the Naperville Library.
- The library has gained another librarian! On December 15, Elizabeth K., Readers Services Associate, earned her Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

### **Reference Services**

- Reference Services Director Jennifer Collette organized State Representative Nicole Grasse's constituent office hours at the library. Additional monthly office hours are planned for 2025 on the first Tuesday of the month.

- The Collection Committee decided to break up our streaming services onto individual Roku. Jennifer and IT Director Mike M. have been working on this project, with all streaming services expected to be fully transitioned by the first week of January 2025.

### **Special Services**

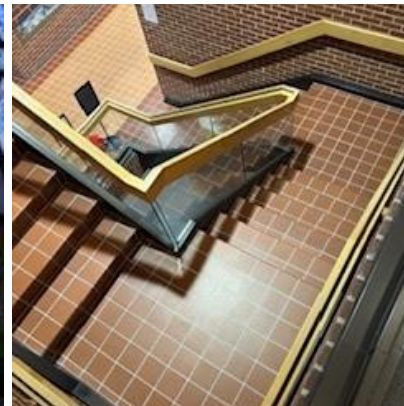
The Special Services team decorated the library for the holidays, assisted with the staff party, and supported the Grand Reopening Celebration on December 2. They created a weekly search-and-find game for the Friends' Winter Village Display, completed materials for the Adult Winter Reading Program, and are working on spring promotions, the Youth Library of Things display, summer reading prep, the 2025 holiday closings, and the launch of the new library website set to go live at the end of February.

### **Technology**

The Technology team completed projects for the Lower Level Renovation, including rigging a portable sound system for the Grand Reopening and reorganizing the Reference Walkup PCs with rebuilt units and adjustable monitor arms. The Roku collection expanded from 11 to 28 devices, including units for Spanish and Youth programming. Technology was dismantled in Meeting Rooms 3 and 4 for the mid-December soundproofing project. New lower-level marquee lights were connected to Smart outlets to extend LED lifespan, and the automation server for PC Reservation and lockdown software was replaced during the New Year's closure.

### **Facilities**

The Facilities team added festive holiday lights and decorations to the front entrance, creating a warm and inviting seasonal display for visitors. To maintain and refresh high-traffic areas, they brought in a professional tile and carpet cleaning service to deep clean and seal the tile and grout on the stairs and in the bathrooms, ensuring a polished appearance and improved durability.



### **Circulation**

Please refer to the Circulation Monthly Statistical Report for the latest data.