



Director's Report—Debbie Bird

Goals and Objectives 2025

20245

Literacy

Goal 1: Increase literacy in our community.

Objective: Craft, advertise and carry out an ESL program each year for different age groups. *Portage Area Literacy Council (PALC) was created and established in 2024 by volunteers. Ellen Swan and Rich Bailey are heading up the program. Library materials were cataloged; tutors have signed up; students have expressed interest. Feasibility still in question. Vickman has connected with ESL teacher, Stephanie Murphy. Currently she has seven students; she is preparing for 42-79 students each year! A tour for high school ESL students was provided. Children's bilingual story time at the library is scheduled for Tuesday, November 12.*

Objective: Promote reading literacy through providing space for routine tutor programs. *PALC schedules most of their tutoring lessons for the library. Second grade teacher from John Muir meets regularly in the Children's Department Study Room with students.*

Objective: Generate **new** learning toys, computer programs and incentives for children to **expand their interests and education** use inside the library. *New toys were purchased as part of the Children's Department remodel. Two children's computer AWE Learning stations are available. The Children's Department has been checking out SCLS science kits, Spheros and Cubelets for activities, crafts and homeschooling events.*

Objective: Promote literacy for all ages through library programming. *This year's literacy programming includes the following: PALC, homeschooling activities to promote social interaction and education, AI programs, one-on-one Tech Assistance, Info Tech computer security training for staff, computer and financial privacy, and VITA to assist in tax preparation.*

Goal 2: Reach more diverse community members and increase bilingual literacy efforts for the community.

Objective: Offer a bilingual story time at least once a year. *Vickman will offer her first bilingual story time on Tuesday, November 12. Her intention is to offer another program before the end of the school year.*

Objective: Select and add new collection materials to the library that encourage development, appreciation and participation for diverse populations and underserved

populations, particularly focused in the Hispanic and Latino communities. *Fiction and non-fiction children's books have been purchased in English and in Spanish. A separate section of adult fiction and nonfiction in Spanish has been added to the collection.*

Objective: Create library displays that showcase and champion diverse cultures. *Displays for Juneteenth Black History, LGBTQIA, Patriots of the American Revolution and Veterans have been displayed this year.*

Objective: Explore novel ideas to introduce and increase teen participation at the library. *The Children's Department secured 19 teen volunteers this past summer for the Summer Library Program (SLP). Programs designed to entice and encourage teen participation include: SLP, Winter Reading Program, Pokemon trading, multiple craft events, duck decorating for fall, and taste tests.*

Objective: Offer translated informational library brochures in Spanish.

Goal 3: Extend literacy development to the most fundamental level that helps people successfully function in their daily lives.

Objective: Offer training for basic computer skills. *Monthly Tech Assistance offered by both Parrillo and Vickman have provided opportunities for those struggling to receive one-on-one assistance with basic computer training and troubleshooting. It is becoming more popular over time.*

Objective: Offer time with Social Work interns to pair with patrons, provide and strengthen mental health options, offer awareness and information to the community regarding other social service needs and availability. *While the Social Intern has fallen through time and time again, Portage Area Workforce and Service Connection (PAWSC) has been putting together a strong network of participants and active contributors. Second Harvest Foodshare has set up time for walk-in questions and assistance. Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) provides the Caregiver's Support Group and spoke to librarians along with St. Croix Hospice at Wisconsin Association of Public Librarians (WAPL) in the spring. Marie from Columbia County Public Health and Sara from Prevention and Response Columbia County (PARCC) have introduced themselves, not only to Portage, but to all the Columbia County directors. Angie from River Haven has worked alongside Parrillo to create a procedural walk-through of steps to take to find shelter, food and transportation. Taxi vouchers were supplied free-of-charge by the City. Remove in 2025.*

Objective: Share information about the duties of different City of Portage departments to better direct patrons to the correct points of contact for assistance. *Toby from Park & Rec is participating in the School Lunch Program and sitting alongside me on the Committee. Michael, City Administrator supplied free taxi-vouchers for library use. Mayor Mitch, Police Chief Keith, Fire Chief Troy, Public Works Head Phil and Finance Director Jennifer have endorsed and have participated in numerous ways to support the needs of the community, as it affects the library.*

Objective: Position the library as a central hub for the community, providing access to vital information, resources, and connections related to social services, networking opportunities, and service availability.

Goal 4: Educate and inform the community on the importance of circulation for funding.

Objective: Encourage library card sign-up and create value with card ownership. *The library celebrated September, Library Card Sign-up Month with incentives to get a library card or update information on the library card for a \$10 Portage Green Gift Certificate drawing. Digital library card sign-up is now available using the LinkCAT app. Offering the virtual library card for patrons who forget their card often or want to utilize the technology.*

Objective: Share metrics regarding how circulation trends with the community and develop programs to generate more check outs. ~~is improving/declining and create incentives for checking collection items out.~~ *Circulation is increasing this year. To the end of October 2024, the number of circulated items is 8,439, up from 8,416 in 2023. Incentives for increased check out include: a new adult fiction collection of books with local holds, designed to keep the most popular items on our library shelves longer for Portage patrons; a book subscription service that takes the sting and trouble of finding a book to read, and places it in the hands of the Adult Services Librarian.*

Objective: Promote digital tools such as Libby for Overdrive and encourage the LINKcat app and the virtual library card.

Technology

Goal 1: Lessen the digital divide.

Objective: Offer patron charging station(s). *The external charging station is being used. Charging cords were purchased this year for multiple types of phones to aid patrons needing to charge their phones and/or laptops. Remove in 2025*

Objective: Offer Chrome Books for checkout to patrons. *Emergency Connectivity Funding (ECF) for four Dell Chromebooks fell through. Remove in 2025.*

Objective: Invest in Overdrive, exploring ways to increase interest, increase circulation and improve services.

Objective: Work within the SCLS to find options for digital products that support the needs and interests of the community and improve the library's image and viability.

Goal 2: Invest in technologies that open more pathways for users.

Objective: Offer an advanced service in 2025. ~~for scanning documents and photos, faxing and printing and provide more self-service equipment.~~ *Leadership Team met with, discussed options with TBS, to purchase Papercut, and advanced methods for patron self-service printing. Unanimously, Vickman, Parrillo, Baumann and myself agreed to table the kiosk and payment options. The opinion was that instead of becoming more efficient, this technology will only increase confusion and frustration for both patron and staff.*

Objective: Explore the possibility of promoting and addingtional environmentally friendly approaches to library services. *Added the last of the remaining garbage cans with recycling containers. Purchased Cover One, equipment designed to restore damaged spines more easily, more effectively and more efficiently on books that can be repaired.*

Objective: Invest in Launchpads, as a new format, to interest and entice users of all ages.

Goal 3: Educate adults and teens on learning basic technology skills and safety and security measures.

Objective: Offer classes on how to protect your identity, your privacy and reduce cyber-attacks.

Objective: Offer annual training for basic computer skills. *Scheduled classes requiring registration on specific and basic computer skills has been replaced by one-on-one tech assistance. Vickman and Parrillo jointly aid and troubleshoot specific questions/problems from library patrons asking for tech assistance. The individual skills of each person can be so very different and the strategy to help them does not lend itself effectively in a classroom setting.*

Objective: Offer **more** opportunities for exploring and understanding artificial intelligence (AI) concepts. *The first program designed to introduce Artificial Intelligence (AI) as an introductory and practical use of the technology was held on Wednesday, October 2, 2024.*

Connection

Goal 1: Effectively partner with area agencies and organizations to meet the needs of our users.

Objective: Support nonprofit organizations through publicity, donation collection, meeting room space or cooperation. *This strategy has worked well for some of the following organizations: PAWSC, PALC, ADRC, local jail book program, Summer Lunch Program, Parks & Rec Euchre and Pickleball, River Haven.*

Objective: ~~Continue to improve the attractiveness of the lobby to make this area more inviting to those in the community and visiting.~~ *Replaced floor mats in the vestibule. Remove in 2025.*

Objective: ~~Concentrate on~~ **Continue to** establishing Portage Area Workforce & Service Connection (PAWSC) as a viable approach to connect patrons in need with the service organization that can assist and support them. *Taxi vouchers and comfort kits were introduced to hand out to those in need. New procedure written for staff that presents the stages of addressing a request from the community for housing and/or food or transportation with names, organizations and phone numbers in a priority order.*

Objective: Reach out to area businesses, finding profitable ways to connect with the community by working together.

Objective: Continue to reach out to social services in the community and add them to our pool of participating agencies. *Agencies that were added to PAWSC partnerships and joint collaborative community include: Community Health Worker Marie Darling Ellis, Sara McChesney from PARCC, Ashley from the Boys & Girls Club and St. Croix Hospice, Laurie Baierl.*

Goal 2: Partner with the other Columbia County libraries.

Objective: Explore and initiate at least one collaborative programming idea that benefits all libraries in the county every year. *The cooperative programming with the other Columbia County public libraries include: offering to each library Maximizing Medicare program through the County. Conversations from Community Health and PARCC were asked to speak to the Columbia County Director's in July along with information regarding the DAR Patriots of the American Revolution 250.*

Objective: Encourage and initiate at least one resource sharing opportunity with the libraries every year. *Google Documents was shared once again with the County Directors regarding upcoming program presenters and resource sharing to receive the best price possible by offering the same program in multiple areas in Columbia County on the same day.*

Goal 3: Promote the cultural and historical heritage of Portage.

Objective: Offer at least one program each year that addresses the cultural heritage of Portage. *Local author Jeff Nania was one of several local authors featured in June. The other authors include Sue Reetz, Annelise Ryan and Melanie Radzicki McManus. The Ice Age Trail Adventure Walks were also featured in June. For the Patriots of the American Revolution connections to local Wisconsin families will be a focus. Genealogy will be a featured event, as well.*

Objective: Catalog the **remaining book** materials in the Sanderson Room, making them accessible to the public **by the end of 2025**. *Marked progress is being made to catalog and get into the online catalog the titles that represent Zona Gale, local authors, local history and military and governmental significance.*

Objective: Revisit the potential for **gGrowing** the local history collection in the Sanderson Room. *Documents from City Hall of considerable historical significance have not yet been extracted.*

Goal 4: Encourage partnerships within the community, using outreach to benefit the library and the residents in new ways.

Objective: Unite Portage schools and school programs with the library to benefit children, families and teachers. *New teacher lunch and the energy bus that brings new teachers into the library for introductions and a tour. Scholarship program continues through the Foundation, awarding the scholarship to Katherine Rieckmann, a teen volunteer from Pardeeville. Summer Library Program was advertised through school visits. Homeschooling programs continue this year to connect families with one another, with the library and with educational opportunities.*

Objective: Partner with City Departments to share the same message of community interest for all residents young and old. *This year the library partnered in the following events or services: National Night Out (Police Department), EMS Referendum information (Fire Department), Staff In Service with the current Mayor, Community Game Day (Police and Fire Departments), Drug Take-Back Day (Police Department), Euchre and Pickleball (Park & Rec Department).*

Objective: Strengthen collaboration with the Friends organization through enhanced support by hosting at least two joint events annually and providing quarterly updates and support for their initiatives.

Objective: Continue to explore ways to improve the library's connection with the Boys & Girls Club.

Library Board Meeting Schedule 2025

Meetings for the Library Board are scheduled for the second Tuesday of each month, beginning at 12 p.m.

January 14, 12 p.m.

February 11, 12 p.m.

March 11, 12 p.m. (reschedule)

April 8, 12 p.m.

May 13, 12 p.m.

June 10, 12 p.m.

July 8, 12 p.m.

August 12, 12 p.m.

September 9, 12 p.m.

October 14, 12 p.m.

November 11, 12 p.m.

December 9, 12 p.m.