

2025 IMPACT REPORT

How Our Friends Story Grows...

Want to see Library Friendship and impact in action?
Page through to read the story of growth and renewal
we've written together over the last year.

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 rclfriends.org

Hello from the Ramsey County Library Friends!

This past year our story took on new meaning, thanks in large part to Friends members. From advocating for libraries at a county budget hearing to helping us contribute \$160,000 to strengthen library programs and collections, members showed up to help renew and expand the importance our libraries hold in Ramsey County.

Along with shoring up support for existing programs, we helped Ramsey County Library launch new efforts like Take-Me-Home Libraries to reach communities across the county, literally bringing the library to people who lack access to books.

Our 2025 Impact Report also highlights voices from the stacks—in their own words. We hear from a Library advocate, a teen Library visitor, and a Friends member about what makes libraries special to them. With Friends like ours, we can't wait to see how our story unfolds in the coming year.

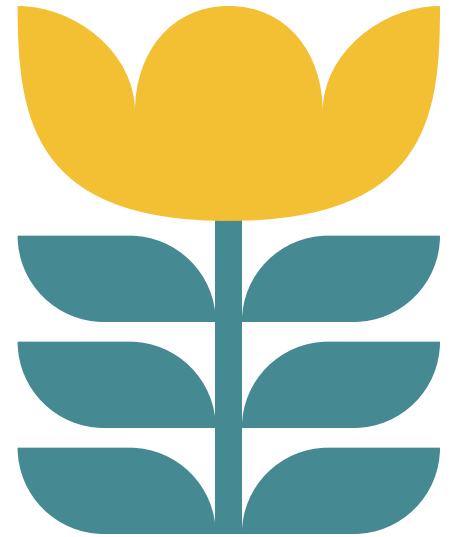
With gratitude and library love,



Jewelie Grape
RCLF Board President



Melissa Nykanen
RCLF Executive Director



Standing Up for Our Libraries

By Susan Miller - Legacy Circle Member, Sustaining Member, and Proud Library Advocate

Public libraries are the modern version of the village commons: a public space and resource shared by all. A library card, free for any county resident, unlocks a world of knowledge, entertainment, technology, and more. But to grow, renew, and expand to meet the needs of our dynamic community, libraries must secure resources in an ever-changing funding landscape. How can we draw the attention of library budget decision makers?

Show up at our county libraries. Sample the many events and classes for everyone from toddlers to seniors. Participate in the book clubs that meet in our libraries. Browse the stacks and check out a title that catches your eye. Libraries track foot traffic and participation—be part of that data!

Amplify your voice. Every time you attend a Friends event or renew your membership, you stand out to county leaders as one more advocate who sees library stewardship as a priority.

Answer the call. In the fall, the Friends mobilized to support library funding in the county's Biennial Budget. We contacted our County Commissioners and donned matching red library t-shirts at a budget hearing, where I was struck by the universal support expressed for our libraries. Let's make that clear with an even bigger turnout when the next budget is considered in 2027. Ready the Red Shirts!

In 2025, there were...

814,428

library visits!

“Something for Everyone”: Making Meaning as a Member

Members in numbers make the Friends strong, and as of this writing we are **965 members deep!**

One is Denise Royal, a Friends member and one of our newest board members. She shares her passion for the Library and what membership means to her.



What do you love about the Library? I love the accessibility for everyone. Not everyone can afford to buy books and other media when they want to, but they can still have the same experiences by going to the library.

It's welcoming as a resource to expand your knowledge

and experiences. If you have trouble finding something, librarians are the best resource of all.

What do you like about being a Friend? I like contributing to keeping the library free and accessible to all who want and need it.

What's an important way that Friends contribute to the Library community? By providing the means for programming that everyone can access. It promotes a sense of community and truly has something for everyone.

What is an early or favorite memory of libraries? Waiting in the library after school with my sister for my mom to get off work. We would browse and do homework until she came to get us, and then we would go home together, sometimes stopping for groceries or going out for a treat.

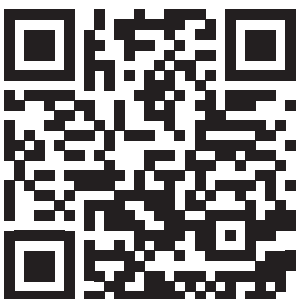
Reading, watching, and/or playing? *When the Wolves are Silent* by C.S. Harris—it's a favorite series! I'm rewatching *Agents of Mystery* on Netflix. A highly addictive mystery/escape room show from Korea. And I'm playing *Cult of the Lamb*. My cult is up to 40 followers, so I need to slay some heretics to get some food to feed them!

Will You Be Our 1,000th Member?

Becoming a 2026–2027 member for as little as \$20 creates the “access for everyone” that Denise celebrates...and you get some perks, too!

- Bookstore coupons and members-only early access to our used book sales
- Discounted registration for special events
- Exclusive volunteer opportunities

Use the QR code to join the Friends and you might just become our 1,000th active member!

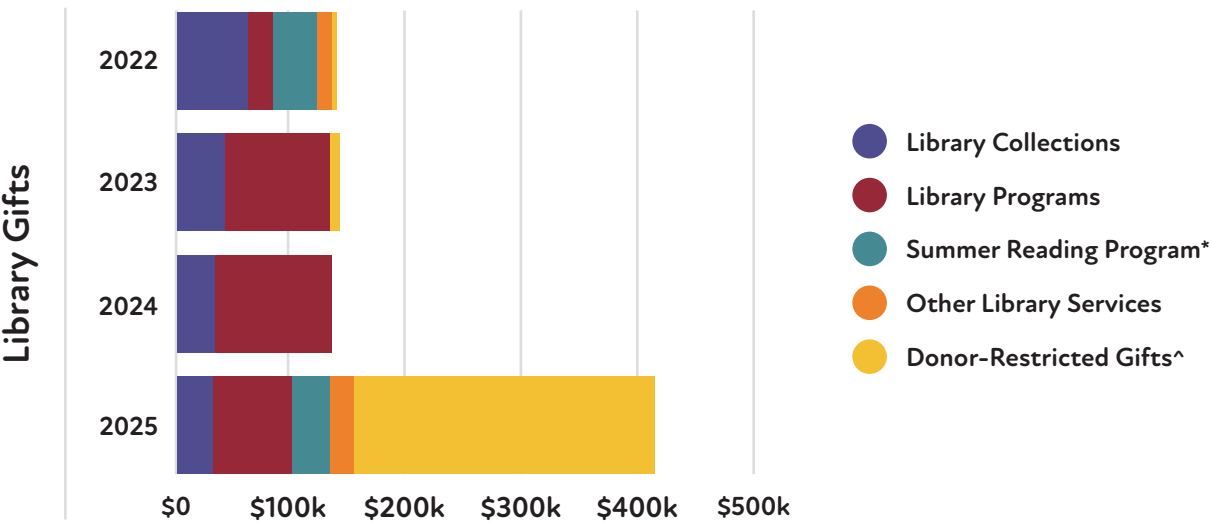


Ramsey County Library Friends is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with the mission to strengthen, support, and advocate for the Ramsey County Library system in order to enrich the lives of Library users, promote literacy and education, and foster community.



Books are Just Chapter 1: How We Grow the Library Community

In making our biggest Library grant ever in 2025, the Friends continued to expand the role libraries play in our Ramsey County community. We helped our seven libraries grow their collections (both books and multimedia), brought back our Breakfast with Friends event, supported kids’ programming, and so much more.



*2023 and 2024 Library Programs funding included the Summer Reading Program.
^2025 Donor-Restricted Gifts included an initial contribution of \$250,000 from the Ronald D. Varns estate fund, restricted to the Mounds View branch.

Meet Laura N., Teen Library Champion

Friends funding fuels library programs for all ages, but what often comes to mind first are programs for our youngest visitors, like weekly storytimes. As teen library power user Laura reminds us, library grants also support Makerteen, gaming, and other programs that give teens the chance to experience the library in new ways.

“The library is a special place for me because I can check out books that would be hard to find otherwise. My favorite program is Makerteen because it’s a good place to do crafts and hang out with friends. One of my favorite memories of the library is going all the time to play with the toys and check out books when I was a little kid.”



In 2025, there were...

2,500+

library programs!

Take-Me-Home Libraries

Ramsey County Library’s outreach department recently launched the Take-Me-Home Library program. The innovative program grows our ability to reach even more readers by installing moveable bookshelves at locations throughout Ramsey County, removing barriers to books and bringing library services into people’s everyday lives.

Sites include the White Bear Area Food Shelf, Today’s Harvest in Maplewood, and Mental Health Urgent Care in St. Paul. The Friends provided the funds to buy the bookshelves and the books to fill them.

2025 Book Sales

Book Sales

Our used book sales in 2025 showed us what makes the Friends community so special: people coming together to support the library they love. For April's sale at the Roseville library, we brought back a members-only presale for the first time in years, giving Friends an early chance to browse the shelves before the public sale began.

The momentum continued with our fall sale in Roseville and December gift sales at the Maplewood and Shoreview libraries, where volunteers, book donors, sponsors, and readers once again showed up to browse and buy. Together, these sales raised more than \$30,000, with every dollar supporting programs, resources, and services across all seven Ramsey County Libraries.

Book Stores

With the help of many wonderful volunteers, the Friends run three Used Bookstores and three Book Carts where our community members find great bargains on used books, puzzles, games, and media materials.

Every purchase at a Friends Used Bookstore supports Ramsey County Library programs and services, while also helping build home libraries.



2025 Events

Breakfast with Friends

Breakfast with Friends made a rousing return in 2025 after a year hiatus. More than 170 people joined us for the fundraiser in April at Manitou Event Center, where author Mona Susan Power gave a lovely talk before signing books and spending time with guests. The event brought in over \$22,000 to expand the lending collection shared by all seven Ramsey County Library locations.

Summer Nights with Friends

In August, Friends members came together at Big Wood Brewery in Vadnais Heights for Summer Nights with Friends. More than 70 supporters came out to celebrate and support the Ramsey County Library Summer Reading Program. Donations helped make sure the Library has the resources and materials needed to create free, fun, and educational experiences to combat the "summer slide" that happens when children and teens don't have opportunities to read and learn over the summer months.

State of the Friends

In October, we hosted State of the Friends at the Shoreview Library, an evening of community, refreshments, and behind-the-scenes updates from Ramsey County Library and the Ramsey County Library Friends for our closest friends, Legacy Circle members, and benefactors. The gathering was also an opportunity to present two awards, the Ruth Palmer and Stand Up for Standout Friends Awards.

In 2025, the Friends distributed...

84,600

used books and
A/V items!

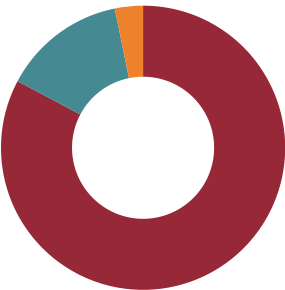
Growing Strong: 2025 Financial Summary

In 2025, growing enthusiasm for the Friends and our mission increased membership revenue by 50% from 2024, allowing us to boost our 2025 Library grant by 22% and propelling us toward our 2026 goal of \$180,000. As we near a never-before-seen milestone of **1,000 active members**, we can only say: **Thank you.**



2025 REVENUE

Contributions, Gifts, Grants.....	155,507
Book Sales	68,354
Membership Dues	125,134
Special Events.....	40,669
Investment Income	281,449
Total Revenue.....	\$671,113



2025 EXPENSE

Programs	511,211
Administrative.....	86,757
Fundraising	19,718
Total Expense	\$617,686

Please visit our website for our 2025 Form 990 and Statement of Financial Position.

In 2025, there were...

947

Friends donors!

Total circulation of...

3,210,945

library items!

And...

6,790

Friends volunteer hours!

Friends Board & Staff

2025-2026 Board of Directors

Board Officers

As of December 31, 2025

Jewelie Grape, President
Mary Laine, Vice President
Valerie Wise, Past President
Sharon Johnson, Secretary
Grant Munson, Treasurer+

Ex Officio Member

Pang Yang, RCL Director

*Rolled off in 2025
+Rolled off in 2026
^Joined in 2026

Board Members

Lynn Belgea
Courtney Billing
Marcia Cheney
Cathy Croghan
Amy Granlund^
Nancy Guerino*, Archivist
Gretchen Needham^
Kirsten Poecher
Cindy Quarfoth
Jan Rapheal+
Denise Royal^
Shawn Rounds, Archivist

Friends Staff

Caitlin Carroll, Events & Communications Manager
Melissa Nykanen, Executive Director
Danielle Wyatt, Donor Relations Specialist



Named for Ramsey County Library's first librarian, this year's Ruth Palmer Award celebrated Cathy Croghan (top), who helped revitalize our Legacy Giving program. Lynn Belgea (bottom) received the 2025 Stand Up for Standout Friends Award for her work as Membership Committee chair and more.