

## Director's report

*Submitted by Natalie Draper, Director of Library Services*

Welcome to new board member, Martha Anderson! Martha brings great experience from the Arts and Culture Commission, which was eliminated in December of last year. She is filling the seat vacated last year by Sherry Mooney.

2026, in some ways, is a year of getting back to basics as we prepare for some big projects happening over the next couple of years. As with our site plans, we are focusing on **Accessibility, Sustainability, and Safety** as we close out the 21-26 strategic plan and prepare for the next one.

- City Council heard a presentation by City Administrator Martig and Library Director Draper and discussed an item related to projects to include for local option sales tax (LST) on 1/6, one of which is the library's site renewal. Council was unanimous in their support for inclusion of the library's site plans in the LST request to the state legislature. This request is due January 31<sup>st</sup>. There will be a vote on the matter at the council meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup>, after which it moves to the state for approval. Assuming all is approved it will likely be on the ballot this November. The Board will receive a presentation on this project as part of tonight's agenda.
- A patron satisfaction survey has gone out with the email newsletter ([link to survey](#)). Board members are encouraged to take the survey and share it with others. This will help guide us as we work on the next strategic plan. SELCO director Krista Ross is available in October to facilitate a strategic plan workshop for the board
- The library will be adding hearing loop to the Bunday Room and service desks this year. A hearing loop (or induction loop) is an assistive listening system that sends clear audio directly to telecoil-equipped hearing aids or cochlear implants, cutting out background noise by using a wire loop to create a magnetic field in a room. Users activate the "T-switch" on their device to receive sound wirelessly from a microphone or audio system, making public spaces more accessible and inclusive for people with hearing loss, often without needing separate equipment. We are also testing out a "caption companion", an AI captioning device for those with hearing loss. We have added text to our event posts to make requests for ASL interpretation and other accommodation easier as well.
- Bunday Room capacity has been reduced from 65 to 45 to ensure seating is inclusive of those with disabilities. This will be a big adjustment! We have had a few over capacity programs in the past year that prompted a decision to reassess how we program the space.

- At their request, we partnered with the Human Rights Commission for the first time this year to help them make the event more inclusive of those with sensory processing differences. We will be providing them with five “sensory kits” to have on hand for the MLK Jr. Celebration at the High School. Normally they are reserved for in-library use.
- Norwegian librarian, Ellen Berg Larsen, visited last fall and spent time with staff at our library and the Wilmar library to gather material for an article on libraries in Minnesota. That article has now been published in Bok & Bibliotek (Norway’s version of Library Journal). If you can read Norwegian, take a look and enjoy: starting on page 24: [Bok & Bibliotek](#)

### **Staff reports**

*Submitted by Katlin Heidgerken Greene, Collection Development Librarian*

*A **connected community** has access to the resources they need.*

- Adult Services Associate Zoe Cheng Pinto (they/them) received special permission and funding from Carleton to continue work over winter break between terms and was able to work extra hours to complete ongoing collection projects. They were able to complete the large mystery weeding project and series labeling that was begun at the start of the term (series inventory started way back last year with our previous student worker, Linda!). The collection looks wonderful! Books in series are now shelved in number order and will be much easier to find/enjoy. Their next project is creating some mystery booklists to promote the new series we have been able to highlight with the project.
- I am working with Tyler and Carleton’s CCCE to add a Summer Fellow position for Accessibility/Collections who will be able to continue this work during the summer break for 2026. Student work hours are so valuable to us and make possible many of these special large projects to improve the library’s collections, while also providing work experience to students interested in libraries or related fields.
- We continue to use our Ingram Express account to receive unprocessed items at near-normal discount more quickly-- as a way to mitigate slowed order fulfillment from Ingram. The discounts have been extended through March so we may continue to lean on this alternative supply option through quarter 1 of 2026 though managing invoices for these expedited items is more time-consuming.
- We are in the process of setting up a book leasing account through Brodart, another library vendor. This will help the library diversify its supplier options and create a new avenue to source bestseller/high-demand titles in a timely fashion. Leasing temporarily-popular materials also creates a built-in end-of-shelf-life plan

for these items, meaning less waste and streamlined staff work time in weeding/removal.

- In early 2026, I look forward to:
  - We will add large print materials to the library Oasis
  - I will work with a committee to pursue sustainable libraries certification
  - I will join other library staff to record an episode of the Library Love podcast for Feb 2026—I love to read month + romance theme

I will present at the Northfield Garden Club's annual luncheon in Feb

*Submitted by Tyler Gardner, Emerging Technology Librarian*

*A **connected community** has access to the resources they need.*

- I am working with Katlin and Carleton's CCCE to add a Summer Fellow position for Accessibility/Collections who will be able to continue this work during the summer break for 2026. I will work with the student on our Website Accessibility project which will involve making sitewide updates to meet WCAG 2.1 standards to web accessibility

## **Outreach Services**

*Submitted by Angelica Linder, Outreach Manager & Alexis Kreft Adult Programming & Outreach Librarian*

November and December was a month focused on wrapping up outreach, programming as well as focusing on older adult including Spanish speakers' older adults while also planning for 2026.

*An **invited community** feels at home in their library.*



We kicked off a new collaboration with [Giving Voice](#) and launched the first Latino Choir in Northfield, with about 10 members, including several older adults. The choir is open to anyone in the community, and the excitement was immediate. After their first rehearsal in November, participants were eager to perform and share Spanish carols with the community. Their first performance on December 17 brought together around 45 people, including family members of the singers. It was a joyful evening filled with pride, music, and a strong sense of connection.

Alexus and Angelica shared our community-created cookbook, *Northfield Cocina*, with the world at a release party on December 5th. Over 30 contributors, family members, and patrons joined us for food and celebration. It was wonderful to watch the contributors see the final product for the first time, and we got amazing feedback from many people involved. This project has been a true labor of love, starting back in October 2024, so it was incredibly rewarding to see it come to fruition.



Thanks to the Friends and Foundation, we are selling the cookbooks for \$20, with all of the funds going toward future Spanish-language programming. We started with 75 copies of the cookbook for sale, we're now down to 16!

Planning is already underway for the 2026 Celebrate Asia Pasifika event, and will continue to host the celebration in partnership with St. Olaf's Asian Studies department. This year, we're looking forward to reaching out to Carleton College's Asian Studies department and Asian student groups to ensure that all students have the opportunity to share and celebrate their culture with our community. I'm so looking forward to the third iteration of this event.

Steve shared that the Winter Walk was a huge success this year. Over 2,400 people enjoyed the trains, music, and cookies. The Northfield Handbell Choir played for an hour. The Friends and Foundation of the Northfield Public Library mingled with patrons handing out cookies and engaging in many wonderful conversations. We had six trains and many happy patrons. The Mayor's Youth Council was a fantastic late addition to our festivities. They handed out candy canes and polled the young ones near the Teen Space.





*A **Connected Community** has access to the resources they need*

On December 22nd, Alexis hosted Catherine Friend for a program, *Shorter Nonfiction for Shorter Memories: Extending the Reading Life of Loved Ones with Memory Loss*. Catherine shared information on and free copies of a grant-funded book project she's been working on creating short nonfiction pieces targeted at readers experiencing memory loss. Although there was a slim crowd, likely because we rescheduled from the original date due to winter weather, Catherine shared useful and engaging information based on her experience caring for her father. Alexis worked with Karin to share free copies with senior living facilities in town after the program as well.

On December 18, we partnered with Growing Up Healthy for their “*Café y Galletas*” program. This gathering created a welcoming space for immigrant families to learn how to prepare an emergency plan and receive support with completing DOPA, POA, and travel permit forms. Our goal was to remove barriers by offering these services free of charge and in Spanish, with Francisco and Angelica available as notaries and interpreters to support families every step of the way. Attorney **Kimberly Decker** was also present to assist with legal questions.

We launched a new collaboration with **St. Dominic Church**, bringing the Spanish computer class directly to that space to better serve our community. The first class took

place on Tuesday, January 6 with eight students participating. The program will continue through the end of February.

Another new partnership was formed with the **Northfield-based End-of-Life Choices Collective**, which will offer quarterly advance care planning open houses for the community at the library on the first Wednesday of January, March, May, September and November.

Steve shared a memorable interaction during a Tech Time visit. A man who had lost most of his hearing, and will very soon completely, came in to get help installing an app on his phone. This app called *Nagish*, will allow all his phone calls to be transcribed. This is a free app that is paid for by a federally administered fund in the United States. Users must be eligible. He said, "this is live changing". He was very appreciative of the library and our support.

In 2025 sent out over 23,000 emails during the 12 months. Over 10,000 Shelf Life emails were opened to take a look at our newsletter. And toward the end of the year, we went over the 2,000 subscriber's mark.

*An **informed community** understands what their library offers and has opportunity to shape the library with feedback.*

Speaking of **Northfield Cocina** by Alexis, she shared that her and Angelica were chosen to present a poster on the project at the 2026 ALA Conference! We can't wait to share what we've learned about community-created publishing, platforming marginalized stories, and using food to bridge cultures with fellow library workers.

Karin organized several visits to older adult facilities to promote the library's home delivery service and added a new stop to our fourth Thursday outreach schedule at Millstream Commons.

Francisco continues regular visits on the fourth Thursdays to Valley View Assisted Living and Millstream Commons. Karin's third Thursday visits include Benedictine Living, 1000 Cannon Valley

Dr., Three Links Apartments, NRC Lobby Stops, Parkview Ivy Dining Room, and the Manor Dining Room.

*An **Included Community** is seen, heard, and engaged by their library*



*We wrapped up the year with a cozy social for the Spanish Book Club on the evening of the Winter Walk. While participation was lower than usual, everyone was excited to share the new year's books and look forward to upcoming discussions.*

We started a new partnership with [A Day at the Farm](#), an organization that offers free recreation and community-building opportunities for people with disabilities, especially adults with more complex support needs. Beginning in January, Steve and Alexis will host a monthly Library Pop-Up on the third Wednesday of each month, with curated book selections and sensory- and family-friendly activities.

We also began the new year by sharing powerful stories of resilience and migration through a partnership with [Puentes/Bridges](#), whose mission is to build connections between immigrant workers and the rural and farming community. The bilingual exhibition "*Chicāhuac: Women's Stories of Strength & Sacrifice from Rural Mexico to the Midwest*" will be on display from January 2–February 4, 2026, with an opening reception on Thursday, January 15 from 5:30–6:30 p.m. The exhibit highlights strength, sacrifice, Indigenous history, and migration through the experiences of women who have led households in rural Mexico while their loved ones work in the Midwest.

For the first time, we are partnering with Nerstrand Big Woods State Park to take part in one of their largest winter events, the Winter Candlelight Event, on Saturday, January 24. Weather permitting, the bookmobile will be on site; if conditions do not allow, we will host a lobby stop instead. Visitors are invited to stop by to check out books, sign up for a library card, or simply connect with library staff while enjoying candlelit trails and warm drinks by the bonfire.

To end the report on a personal note from Alexis:

"I began working full-time in my position in late December, and I'm so thrilled to grow my capacity and continue this incredibly rewarding work!"

**Youth Services report attached**