

Have you checked out the Library Lately?

Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County Commissioner - District 7

From resume writing classes to story time, the Ramsey County Libraries has something for everyone. Our library system is one to brag about. Not only are our libraries gems in our community, they are nationally recognized. The Library Board and staff work very hard to provide a wide range of services and activities throughout Suburban Ramsey County. Last year almost 12,000 kids signed up for the summer reading program, and programs for teenagers grew by leaps and bounds.

Every Friday morning is special for White Bear Lake area families, because it is family story time at the library in Downtown White Bear Lake. Bring your kids age 2 to 5 and start the day with stories, songs and plays. Activities like this build lives and communities. There is fun for grown-ups too, such as the mystery book club, and lectures about our local history hosted by the White Bear Lake Historical Society. On April 23rd there will be a discussion about Wildwood Amusement Park on the shores of White Bear Lake.

All activities and events can be found on an easy to use calendar on the web at www.rclreads.org . The searchable calendar and many other easy to use research tools are all part of the recently redesigned website. The new format has helped drive internet visits to the library up by over 11%. You can search by activity, location, and even age appropriateness. The calendar can help you find things for your teenager to do at the nearest library, gardening classes for you, and many other interesting activities for all to explore and enjoy.

Ramsey County Libraries strive to be useful to the whole community as an information resource. That means changing with the times. You will notice there is more space dedicated to computers and usage has grown. And it is not just about access to computers, it is about teaching people how to use them in their lives. Last year thousands of Ramsey County residents took advantage of computer classes offered at the Libraries. There are classes for teens and adults as well as one-on-one help sessions. The topics range from introduction to email to using the internet to aid a job search.

The latest technological addition to the Ramsey County Library system is the introduction of ebooks. By downloading the app from www.rclreads.org, library patrons can download ebooks to their favorite e-reading device. Material can be downloaded for 7 to 21 days and then is automatically “returned”, there is never an overdue fee. Providing Downloadable books is yet another example of how Ramsey

County Libraries are working hard to keep up with customer demand. Please let your librarian know how they can serve you better.

Our vibrant, nationally recognized library system contributes to our quality of life in Suburban Ramsey County. There is truly something for everyone to enjoy. I remember taking my sons to story time when they were young and seeing the pure joy in their eyes as they listened. The research I was able to do at the library helped me through college. And, I have enjoyed taking classes, attending events, reading, and using the genealogy tools to find out more about my family history. From my perspective, you never outgrow the library.

On a recent library visit, a new patron commented to me about how impressed he was with the Ramsey County Libraries - the welcoming atmosphere, friendly faces and ease of finding exactly what he needed. He went on to say that the library is clearly more than just access to information, it is a community gathering place. I wholeheartedly agree and will continue to work hard to keep our library system strong.