



Director's Report—Debbie Bird

Who Are We in the Food Chain?

The library remains an enigma to many people—young and old. There is so much that is not understood about the purpose of libraries that I find myself, feeling the need to justify our existence, particularly as residents point out the undesirable traits of librarianship—librarians as instigators, pushing porn, politicizing topics.

More specifically, we are considered dessert and not dinner—a luxury, but unnecessary. We are not essential. We offer that frivolous mix of books that can be checked out for free, meeting rooms that don't cost anything to rent if you're a not-for-profit and a place to go for kids' programming. And while these attributes are notable, it goes a long way from declaring libraries as essential services.

Libraries are Essential

1. **Libraries offer free educational resources to everyone...**they provide safe, accessible and 100% free educational resources for every member in communities across the country.
2. **Libraries are safe refuges for the homeless and underserved populations...**not only do they offer a safe and free refuge for those who need shelter, but they offer support to those in need.
3. **Libraries help boost local economies...**they play a key role in financially strengthening local communities, by providing a work space for telecommuters, supply free internet access for people looking for employment opportunities and offer job and interview training.
4. **Libraries play an important role in English language learning...**allowing English language learners the opportunity to immerse themselves in their new language, offer up multilingual books for adults and children designed to help new learners master the language, expand non-English book collections to create a more inclusive environment and offer ESL learners educational resources to connect others with free language classes, bilingual housing and employment help.

5. **Libraries preserve history and more importantly, truth...**by providing free access to educational, news, and historical resources libraries are important defenders in the fight against misinformation, keeping the public informed with facts.
6. **Libraries help connect communities...**to learn, share and celebrate where they live, who they are, and what they want to become.

In 2025 the American Library Association reports that 92% of parents and 90% of voters have favorable opinions of libraries and over half of voters view public libraries as essential local institutions.

The Portage Public Library serves and supports the community through open access to resources, partnerships and technology.

Fund Balance/Carry Over Projects 2025

1. Large Print Shelving	\$ 3,000.00
2. Demco Display Shelving	\$ 1,779.54

TOTAL FUND BALANCE EXPENSE (230 Account)	\$ 4,779.54
FOUNDATION EXPENSE (231 Account)	\$18,595.00