



2022 Library Visit Interview Form

Library Name: Ruth Culver Community Library of Prairie du Sac

Certification Grade: 1

Date of visit: 8/4/2022

Library staff present at the visit: Lauren White

SCLS staff present: Brinnan Shaffer

Amount of time spent at visit: 45 minutes

[Please limit this section to the answers to the specific questions, and include as much detail as possible. Report other information or observations in the “other information” section below.]

1. How are you and your staff doing?
They are a “little burned out.” It’s tough being the decision maker during tough times. She said that their front desk staff is really resilient. They hired a new staff member, Bethany, from Columbus. They are a bit “in flux” as there have been changes in the library board.

2. What are the next projects (big or small) on your library’s to-do list?
1) LED conversion 2) The Community Read in conjunction with Sauk Prairie Social Justice and Equity (formally the Optimists Club). This year they will be reading “Solito, Solita” which is a collection of oral histories that tells—in their own words—the story of young refugees fleeing countries in Central America and traveling for hundreds of miles to seek safety and protection in the United States. The publisher kindly donated 100 copies of the book! They chose this book specifically because of the “othering” that Lauren sees directed towards the community of Bluff View. This community is almost exclusively (if not entirely) made up of people from Latin America. The library would like to bring in guest speakers to help bridge the gap and foster more understanding in the community than they might get from just reading the book. Lauren has had some difficulty getting engagement between the library and the people living in Bluff View. She noted that for some of the Bluff view residents, their ideas about libraries are different from people who grew up in the United States. For many of them, libraries are *not* free and are for use by the wealthy in the community. Lauren tried having the Bookmobile in Bluff View, but it didn’t really take off and that endeavor was ended (at least for now). We talked about maybe using food as the entry point to getting people to learn about the library...come for the food, learn about the library?! I suggested teaming up with a local food pantry but Lauren said she’d tried that without success. (While trying to include the Bluff View residents in the library and in the community at large has been an uphill climb, Lauren has the drive and the passion and I know she is going to get there.)

3. Are there service changes or new services from the last two years that you plan on continuing?

Everyone loves the “Take and Makes.” The interest in these is not waning. They will continue to have their holds-pick-up table near the front entrance. The books are checked out to the patron(s) and left on a table that is easily accessible. Lauren said that people really like this in the winter, and that parents love to just park, leave the kids in the car, and quickly run in to get their materials.

How can SCLS help? Lauren said that in general she feels supported by SCLS. The one exception she noted was during Covid. She felt that the “Bounce Back” stuff was too late and said it felt more reactive than proactive.

4. Is there anything else you’d like to share or discuss? Lauren gave me a nice tour of the library, including the library critters (some of whom live at schools during the school year) and their lovely garden where a former library-frog is buried. She also showed me where their future expansion will be. We talked a bit about “Sauk Prairie.” I asked about the identities of the two cities and she noted that older folks in the community definitely feel like you are either from Prairie du Sac or you are from Sauk City. Younger people, however, tend to see it more as the blended Sauk Prairie. Lauren mentioned that sometimes the adult library users wonder why the adult area is in the lower level and therefore has a slightly “lesser” view of the river. Lauren explained that the building structure cannot support the weight of the adult collection on the first floor – too heavy!

Other information gathered at the visit (interesting tidbits, general impressions of the library, or alternative topics):