



2022 Library Visit Interview Form

Library Name: Portage Public Library

Certification Grade: 1

Date of visit: 10/26/2022

Library staff present at the visit: Debbie Bird

SCLS staff present: Kayla Linke, Vicki Teal Lovely

Amount of time spent at visit: 90 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?

Ann Vickman took over for Chris Baker as Technology Coordinator (she is also youth services librarian).

They are busy enough to be overwhelmed. Debbie hasn't had a normal year since she started because the 1st year they were shut down for a while due to a sprinkler problem and the 2nd and 3rd years were COVID. Programming attendance is higher than it was pre-COVID. Circulation is still down from pre-COVID. They did not have a children's librarian for almost a year. Ann Vickman started in March. They exceeded numbers for previous summer library program: doubled teen and tripled adult. They had 60 people attended a program on haunted Portage.

2. What are the next projects (big or small) on your library's to-do list?

There are no small projects. The next one is a project in conjunction with TBS and Rhyme (local copier company) to do a media suite: a scanner (Scan EZ) to scan pictures, etc. This was started before Chris Baker left. They were going to do Papercut, credit card and a coin op—but that was tabled to 2023.

Waiting for the outdoor charging station from SCLS grants.

They purchased new teen furniture and they will be doing an internal decoration in that area to encourage more teens to come in. They hired a muralist who finished one mural and will do another.

There was a lot of turn-over in directors prior to Debbie. She has been there a while and there is stability which has resulted in an increased demand for service. They are dealing with the

county funding issues. The library has a good Friends group.

They are getting a new phone system. The current one has no time or caller ID. The city got ARPA money and Debbie requested a new phone system. It's a VoIP intra system.

They worked with Mark Jochem and started PAWSC which connects them to resources in workforce and service. They purchased a laptop and they have study rooms available so that people can connect to resources online and have privacy. They are looking into the social intern cohort program with UW Madison and UW Stevens Point (it had been delayed). Organizations are now calling to ask if they can be a guest (like Second Harvest).

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

During COVID, They started offering programs before the library opens and after the library closes so that people could spread out. They are continuing this.

They learned a lot in those two years that have helped them now. When a former children's librarian left, they broke down physical silos in the building. For example, there was a children's entrance and an adult entrance (on each side of the building). Right now, there is a section in the middle that was decorated by all age groups. They are trying to eliminate "children's program" and "teen program" and "tween program" concepts. A lot of the programs are now "family" programs. People can self-select the programs. They had a program where families could get pictures taken and they then used them with their holiday cards. This year they did it in front of the fireplace. It's not about an age any more. A lot of seniors are coming in now. The annual report breaks things down by the age categories—can we work to change this? People are now encouraged to walk in either door in the building. This is a result of COVID because they had to look at things differently. They are getting new furniture for the teen area and they may just open it so anyone can be in there. The Boys and Girls Club is now partnering with the library. They partner with the Chamber for the cookie walk and they send people through to the other end of the library to get to hot chocolate.

4. How can SCLS help?

Needs assistance with technology since Chris left. They are having difficulty with barriers. They met with Craig via Zoom and that has helped.

Are the standards with DPI going to change now that magazines are being cancelled? They aren't able to purchase newspapers because they are more expensive and they need to keep buying magazines. People want newspapers, but they are very expensive.

Statistics is another area where they need help. Circulation of hard copies is part of the county formula. She needs to figure out what patrons want. The easier that it is for them to get at the data, the better. Collection development data is helpful.

5. Is there anything else you'd like to share or discuss?

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