



## 2023 Library Visit Interview Form

**Library Name:** George Culver Community Library in Sauk City

**Certification Grade:** 2

**Date of visit:** 6/6/2023

**Library staff present at the visit:** Lisa Reiner Thomas

**SCLS staff present:** Mark Jochem

**Amount of time spent at visit:** 1.75 hrs

**[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.]**

- What's new and/or innovative at your library?
  - a. The Children's Dramatic Play and Literature Center. It provides dedicated space that includes a play/learn kitchen space, materials, and décor based on a book theme. The theme at the time of visit was the *Very Hungry Caterpillar*. The next theme will be a farm-based theme.
  - b. Staffing issues. Lisa has been at the library for 19 months and has experienced a lot of staff turnover recently, especially in library assistant positions. Due to underfunding and retirements, the library has not been able to retain staff.
- What are the next projects (big or small) on your library's to-do list in the coming year?
  - a. A big upcoming project is creating a joint strategic plan with Prairie Du Sac. They will be consulting with WiLS to create the plan. Lisa says it will be a major undertaking for both libraries. She hopes it will help with future budgeting discussions with the city council.
  - b. Next year will be the library's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Staff are beginning to plan for the celebration. This will also be a chance to have a “reopening” to attract more of the community members to the library. Library awareness in the community is not as Lisa would hope. There are many who have not come to the library since its remodel was completed in June 2020.
- What challenges or concerns is your library facing now and in the near future?
  - a. The biggest challenge on Lisa's mind is the budget. The library is a major circulating library in the county, yet lacks the financial support to be fully staffed. As a result, they cannot take on the initiatives and projects that could enhance library service. There is also a significant difference in municipal support when compared to the nearby library, Ruth Culver Community Library (PDS).
  - b. The city departments are quite siloed – the library would like to collaborate with other departments (Parks and Rec, Police, Schools, and others), but there doesn't seem to be a culture of interdepartmental collaborations. The impact of this is that the library ends up paying for many services (routine maintenance, for example) from its budget.
- How might SCLS help your library or staff with your challenges, concerns, or projects?
  - a. Lisa would like help strategizing for the next budget request and advocating for library support from her board.
- What would you like to see SCLS focus on or prioritize in the coming year?
  - a. Would like to see a training on how village funding works.
  - b. She feels like SCLS is doing a “bang-up” job serving its members. She is very pleased with the

support she receives from the system.

- Is there anything else you'd like to share or discuss?
  - a. The library is collecting stories from patrons about how it helps them in their lives. The eventual hope is to use the stories for advocacy.
  - b. Lisa is a data-driven person and she really appreciates all of the reports from Tim.
  - c. I asked about the Local Holds Pilot. Lisa mentioned that at first she was skeptical, and was worried about the impact on resource sharing. However, since joining it, she's seen the benefits of being able to make recent acquisitions more accessible to community members. There are only a few items that she had anticipated would be hits with the community, but have seen lower circulation.

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

- The George Culver Community Library is stunning from a design-perspective. It has beautiful exposed beams, industrial elements (reflecting the building's history), and well laid out spaces. The building has an interesting past. Built in 1913, it was originally a cemetery monument factory. Several of the original factory equipment was retained, including hauling equipment for the marble used in the monuments; a garage door that was converted into a large window/door leading to patio space; and pictures from the past.

Here is a link to the pictures: <\\sclfs01\SCLS\Projects\Visiting Libraries\2023\Reports\SKC 2023 Pictures and 2022 By the Numbers>

Here is a link to the 2022 By the Numbers infographic: <\\sclfs01\SCLS\Projects\Visiting Libraries\2023\Reports\SKC 2023 Pictures and 2022 By the Numbers\George Culver Community Library 2022 By the Numbers.pdf>