



ROOTED IN OUR COMMUNITY
GROWING FOR OUR FUTURE
Aram Public Library Campaign



A CASE FOR SUPPORT



A LIBRARY WITH DEEP COMMUNITY ROOTS

Our library has a rich history in the community and its humble origins date back to 1897. Delavan residents James and Susan Aram bequeathed \$20,000 to the city in honor of their three young deceased daughters to establish and maintain a public library and reading room to be named the Aram Public Library.

Their commitment – and yours – to promoting literacy and education to the Delavan community via a welcoming, state-of-the-art library is part of what makes Delavan a warm and welcoming place to live, work, and play.

THE PANDEMIC PIVOT IN 2020

5,059 attended
44 live virtual programs
34,002 visited the website

11,488 tuned in to 570
pre-recorded programs

54% of city and area
residents are registered
library patrons

+45%
website visits

+50%
social media
following

+1001%
online patron
registration



OUR PURPOSE

Aram Public Library reflects our Delavan community. It is a welcoming, lively, diverse and, to quote a younger patron, “awesome” place. As a community we have relied on its resources for more than a century and it still offers something new every day.

Our library collaborates with the Delavan Parks & Recreation Department and the Delavan-Darien School District. It offers programs for bilingual children and adults as well as patrons associated with the Wisconsin School for the Deaf.

The library’s evolution over the past three decades into Delavan’s tech, learning, and economic hub has pushed the library beyond capacity to serve all segments of our population. While the current building has been upgraded over the years, continuing to solve immediate issues without addressing long-term needs is neither practical nor financially responsible. It is time to plan for the future. **It is the right time to build for tomorrow.**

OUR PEOPLE

Libraries are about people. They are a go-to resource for entertainment and education. They inform and instruct. People use libraries for solitary research, reading, social interaction, and enjoyment. Libraries affirm our need for and connection to each other.

That need became even more critical in 2020 when our library and library staff faced the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our librarians responded quickly. Services included increased parking lot wifi access and mobile hotspots, on-line registration, a wide variety of virtual programs, curbside delivery and book bundles, job seeking workshops, and a reading challenge app. Library staff also coordinated with the Walworth County Department of Health & Human Services for a COVID-19 vaccination event.

People – the producers – provide written, recorded, and created materials. People – knowledgeable library staff – provide access to these materials from finding a particular book to surfing the web and accessing technology. People – everyone who visits the library either in-person or from home, school, or the car – can use the library’s resources. **Always free.**

“ During the 2020 pandemic my heart swelled with pride as the staff rose up, adapted and continued to serve the community’s needs. ‘Small but mighty’ is an apt description of our library.”

~ Linda Zell, retired teacher, Trustee, Aram Public Library



Jonathan from Piggly Wiggly in Delavan



Jerry from TNT Ace Hardware in Delavan

Local businesses, organizations, and community leaders participated in a Summer Storyteller Series by reading a children’s book related to what they do. Readings were recorded and posted on Facebook in order to share with children (and remind adults) of the relationship between the library and the people they see in stores and around town. **The program was nominated for and received the Wisconsin Library Association’s “Programming Innovation Award” in 2021.**

OUR PLACE

The first Aram Public Library patrons of more than a century ago had a mere 2,332 books to choose from. Nevertheless, the library was a popular place and quickly became a beloved Delavan institution. It also worked to keep up with the growth of Delavan as well as advances in communications, technology, and regulatory requirements. However, the original structure has undergone several renovations including a major expansion in 1991 bringing the space to 12,116 square feet. A new children's area, elevator, modern restrooms, and a meeting room were added.

In 2004 the meeting room was sacrificed to house the growing youth collection and a teen space was carved out of main floor area previously used for book/magazine shelving. Still the need not only for room but also amenities continued to grow at a fast pace. On both occasions, neighbors, and friends recognized the library's importance and contributed to modernizing their library with gifts to support these improvements.

A Needs Assessment Study in 2018 confirmed that the library continually offers more programs than it can accommodate with its current square footage. Requests for services simply cannot be provided due to lack of space. To cite just one example, in 2019 the library could accommodate only 23% of requests to use the community meeting room. Since 1999, children and adult programming has increased 77%. Book volume has grown 60%. Most significantly, audio, music and video DVDs, and CDs have grown 86%.



The library opened in 1908 at its current location and has served as a downtown hub for more than 100 years.

The last major expansion of the library was 30 years ago in 1991.



WHY RENOVATE AND EXPAND OUR EXISTING LIBRARY?



Our existing facility has served us well for more than 30 years with some areas over 100 years old. However, the current building presents significant challenges, including:

- Inadequate and overcrowded meeting spaces for community events and programs
- Kids' summer programs have to be held in a tent on a gravel lot due to a lack of indoor programming space
- Limited parking and inadequate ADA accessibility
- Limited space for public computers with some stations difficult to access
- Narrow aisles and walkways not suitable for users with strollers or in wheelchairs
- No quiet space for individual study or reading
- Meeting areas lack typical amenities like AV systems and counters for food service
- Areas housing books, audio-visual materials, and electronic resources are so cramped it limits browsing



Deterioration
in our present
space



Children's
programs in a
rented tent

OUR PLAN

Libraries today are community centers. Library patrons expect and deserve a bright and open environment with up-to-date, accessible and ample technology, on-line learning and in-library story times, activities, and reading clubs. A full-service library offers both places for groups and spaces for individuals.

The plan for an expanded, modern library will build on the same centrally located site as the original 1908 library. Many of the new library's goals remain as timely and relevant as then:

- Stimulate curiosity and learning
- Foster innovation
- Strengthen partnerships
- Promote understanding and appreciation for our personal and collective heritage
- Provide room to gather, to grow and to progress
- Ensure that services are open to all and always FREE.



New Entrance on 4th Street



Children's Area

THE PROJECT

An upgraded library is a critical community need. Our plan to renovate and expand the existing historic building will not only be a stunning addition to downtown, it also will offer the most requested and needed community services and resources:

- Renovate the existing space of 12,116 square feet and **add an additional 23,162 square feet of net space**
- A new main entrance on 4th Street with a second entrance off the east-side parking lot
- Multiple rooms for events, workshops, and meetings including study rooms and a kitchen demo area
- A discovery/exploration area and Makerspace
- Designated space for teen/young adults
- Larger, modern children's department with flexible programming areas including bilingual and ASL events
- Remote workspace and centralized tech area with plenty of power outlets for devices
- Access to meeting rooms outside library hours
- Additional adult program areas for various size audiences
- Safe, attractive, and functional space for all visitors
- New opportunities for community partnerships and involvement
- User-friendly and cost-efficient one-story design for staff and patrons
- And, additional parking

Children's
Program Area
& Meeting
Room





OUR LIBRARY IS A COMMUNITY PROJECT

- The project is estimated to cost about \$9 million, which includes, design and construction.
- The Delavan Common Council approved a resolution authorizing design and construction to expand the Aram Public Library at an estimated cost of \$9 million.
- The community is invited to support the project through our fundraising campaign.
- Our campaign includes meaningful naming opportunities for public areas and a variety of giving levels. In addition, grants and funds from partner agencies will also be sought to offset some of the expense.

Our Board, Foundation, and community leaders see this partnership as an opportunity to engage the community and transform our existing library into an exceptional modern library complete with the latest technology and the flexible spaces that will enable unique, effective learning opportunities for people of all ages. Working together - individuals and families, businesses, civic, and social groups will drive the campaign to raise funds to transform our library.

THE TIME IS NOW. THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS TO MAKE A MEANINGFUL GIFT TO THE CAMPAIGN.

- **Pledges.** Pledges are multi-year commitments made in good faith but are not legally binding.
- **Cash.** Gifts made by cash, check, credit card, or electronic transfer from your financial institution.
- **Qualified Charitable Distribution from Traditional IRA.** Up to \$100,000 per year can be transferred directly from your IRA tax-free. If you are over 70½ years of age, the gift also qualifies for your required minimum distribution.
- **Securities.** There may be significant tax advantages to you when you donate appreciated stocks, bonds, or mutual funds.
- **Life Insurance.** The Aram Public Library can be named as a primary or contingent beneficiary of a life insurance policy.
- **Bequests.** You may also provide a significant gift in the future by designating the Aram Public Library as a beneficiary in your will, trust, or retirement plan.



CONTACT US

Michelle Carter, Director
Aram Public Library
404 E. Walworth Avenue
Delavan, WI 53115
262-728-3111
director@aramlibrary.org

*Original artwork created by
Linnea Bergstrom*

