

Volunteers are an integral part of the work we do at Saint Paul Public Library. They greatly enhance services for Saint Paul Public Library visitors and build capacity to serve the Saint Paul community.

By The Numbers

660

Number of people who volunteer at SPPL.

6,953

Total number of hours volunteers worked to support SPPL.

13

Age of youngest volunteer

87

Age of oldest volunteer



RIGHT TRACK INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Right Track is the City of Saint Paul's youth employment initiative for building a diverse future workforce, while supporting young people and their families now. Last summer we hosted 16 interns at 10 different libraries and hosted six school-year interns at six different libraries. Interns helped with a variety of tasks and projects helping them develop soft and tangible skills as well as building capacity for the work done in libraries.

"I loved my experience at the Rice Street Library and want to come back next year!" — Right Track intern.

"This is my second year interning at the Sun Ray Library. I would love work here one day!" — Right Track intern.



FEATURED VOLUNTEERS

Jody Huber

Jody is a dedicated volunteer who spent 352 hours at Merriam Park Library to shelve DVDs and create displays. She is a dedicated volunteer to the Saint Paul Library, and the library is so incredibly grateful for her contributions.

"There is an enormous pleasure I get in volunteering for the Saint Paul libraries. I feel quite lucky, as a matter of fact" — Jody.



Dennis Nelson

Dennis Nelson has been a volunteer at SPPL since 2017. He is a fixture of the Innovation Lab makerspace at George Latimer Central Library, where he has taught laser engraving weekly for many years. Dennis is a dedicated volunteer, and the Innovation Lab wouldn't be the same without his contributions.

"I get a lot of satisfaction in seeing someone learn something new." - Dennis.

The Bookmobile brings library services to residents and students across Saint Paul who face barriers visiting the library's brick and mortar locations and serves as a bright, colorful, and welcoming outreach tool to introduce people to Saint Paul Public Library.

By the Numbers

Bookmobile staff build strong relationships with library users who visit the mobile library for the opportunity to connect with friendly faces, as well as to access library services.

63,933

Visitors engaged with the Bookmobile who might otherwise not have any connection with the library.

38

Regular stops across Saint Paul to serve residents who face barriers to visiting a library building.

59,897

Books, magazines, and other items checked out from the Bookmobile

58%

Of stops are in areas of concentrated poverty

64%

Of Bookmobile users do not access other library services.

12

Languages heard at Bookmobile stops: Amharic, Dari, English, Hindi, Hmong, Karen, Mandarin, Nepali, Somali, Pashto, Spanish, and Urdu.

3,800

Children's books given away at community events to build home libraries.

1,200

Students visit weekly to check out materials, fostering a love of reading and learning.



What we've heard...

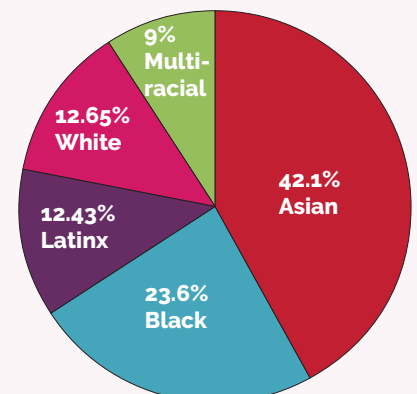
"I saw you at Summer School, you gave me an awesome sticker book."
-Student visitor

"This place is so awesome. I love coming in here."
-5th grade student at Bruce Vento Elementary

"My mom really enjoys her trips to the Bookmobile. It gets her outside and gives her something to look forward to."
- Child of a senior Bookmobile visitor

"I love how Bookmobile staff always know my name when I visit."
-Bookmobile visitor

DEMOGRAPHICS OF STUDENTS SERVED





Through a language-first and culture-first approach, Community Services at Saint Paul Public Library transforms and expands library services to build relationships between staff and community members to foster a true sense of belonging and connection to a library where everyone is reflected and welcome. The work is intentionally intergenerational and multilingual to create an inclusive and accessible library.

By the Numbers

Community specialists strengthened relationships with the Black/African American, K’Nyaw, Latinx, and Somali communities and connected people to valuable services, both within and outside of library doors. In 2023, a Hmong specialist was added to broaden the reach of this work.

Services included computer classes with culturally-specific approaches for K’Nyaw, Somali, and Black/African-American communities; cultural programs celebrating the diverse communities of Saint Paul; and one-to-one help interpreting information and connecting to resources.



What we’ve heard...

“Wow!! This is the coolest thing ever! I can touch all this equipment and use everything for free.” – K’Nyaw youth visiting the Innovation Lab

“When there are people who speak our language, it’s different from other times. As far as being welcomed, we are very welcomed, but when there is someone whom you can speak with in your native tongue and they can understand you, it’s definitely better.” – Somali focus group participant

1,121

Connections made at multi-cultural community events to build relationships with BIPOC residents.

40

Participants attended K’Nyaw bilingual storytime with author Remona Htoo promoting multicultural literacy.

16

Participants in the K’Nyaw artist in residence program explored hands-on art creation.

159

Citizen and Immigration Resource Fair attendees given technical assistance to connect under-served communities to resources.

80

Students participated in Spanish-language computer classes (January 2021 -December 2022).



Createch is a welcoming space created by teens and for teens to explore creative talents, pursue their interests, and spark new passions. Createch, located at four library locations throughout Saint Paul, nurtures community and identity-building.

By the Numbers

655

Teens participated in Createch

54%

Of teens participated in Createch more than once

4

Library locations with dedicated Createch space and staff

8

New 3-D purchased; two printers at each site



What our teens say...

What makes you feel welcome in Createch?

The staff, the people, the place.

It feels safe and is already comfortable to be in. I am making new friends.

The nice library staff. There are nice people around Createch.

What our staff say...

Socializing and community continue to play an essential role in the importance of Createch. In a survey of nearly 100 teens, almost all indicated that they enjoy Createch because they can hang out with friends, meet people, and be in a teen-friendly space.



Homework Centers are comfortable spaces at the library where students of all ages can drop in and work on their homework independently or with the help of volunteer tutors. The centers are equipped with computers, printers, reference books, and school supplies for student use.

By the Numbers

140

Trained tutors volunteered at a Homework Center.

91%

Of students say they have learned new ideas or ways of doing things at a Homework Center.

641

Individual students were helped at a Homework Center.

2,159

Hours volunteer tutors helped students at Homework Centers.

5

Library locations host a Homework Center.

5

Number of times each student visited a Homework Center (on average).

97%

Of survey respondents say they would recommend the Homework Center.



What we've heard from students...

It gets me good grades.

Peaceful place to practice.

All the supplies there when you need it.

You can get your work done with a helper.

When asked how the Homework Center has helped with school:

49% said "I hand in my homework more."

31% said: "I feel more prepared in school."

60% said: "I finish my homework."

33% said: "I feel good about handing in my homework."



Career Labs (now known as Open Labs) provide computer access and one-to-one assistance navigating online job search tools to help people achieve their career goals. Open Labs also provide referrals to community services in a welcoming and supportive environment for community members with disparities in digital device ownership and experience.

By the Numbers

3,484

Individual help sessions to connect residents to digital resources and assistance finding jobs.

7

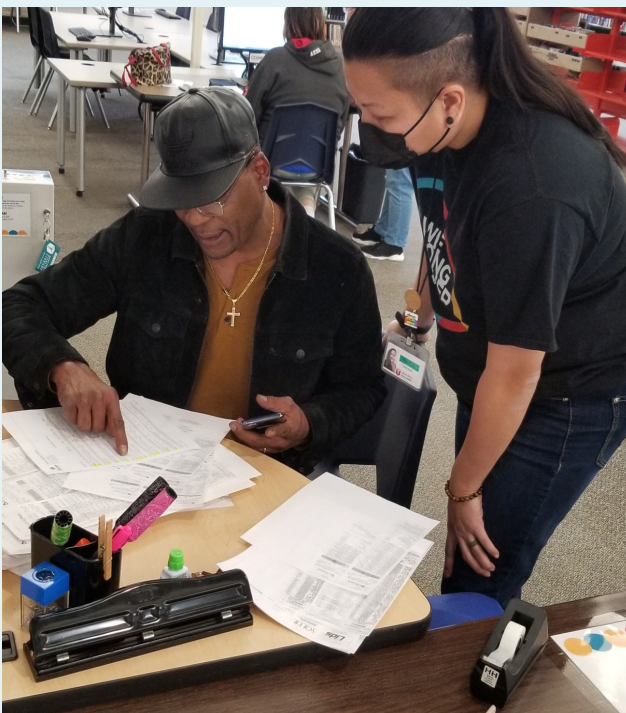
Library locations offering Open Lab to provide digital access and job search help across the city.

What we've heard...

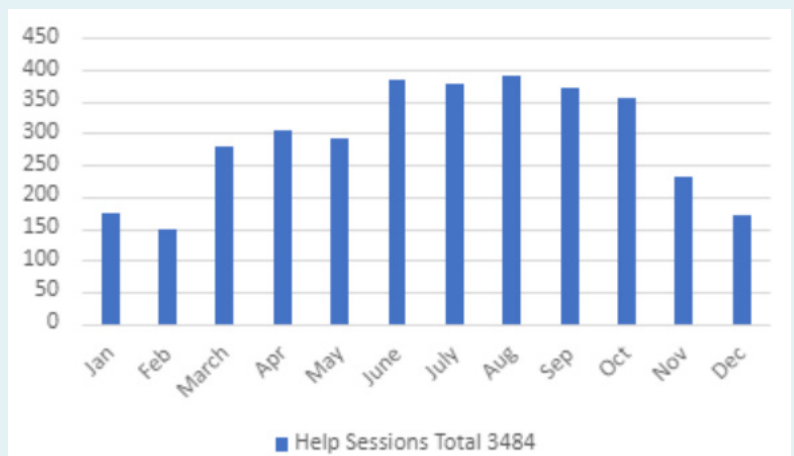
"You guys do great work here, thank you so much for the help, this job will really benefit me."
- Library visitor on getting a job at a local hospital

"We hear people say: 'I got the job, I got the pay that I wanted,' all from something as simple as being able to upload a document to an email." - Library staff

"I used a resume template to help a patron complete his resume and downloaded it onto a USB drive that he could keep. He later let me know he got the job he was applying for." - Library staff



PEOPLE HELPED PER MONTH



Reading Together matches dedicated volunteers with elementary school students who need literacy support. The program offers positive, consistent mentoring relationships in a safe learning environment to practice reading skills and connect kids with books they love.

By the Numbers

132

Individual students who participated in Reading Together to work on reading skills.

52

Trained volunteers who mentored one or more young readers with literacy skills.

6

Library locations hosting Reading Together pairs.



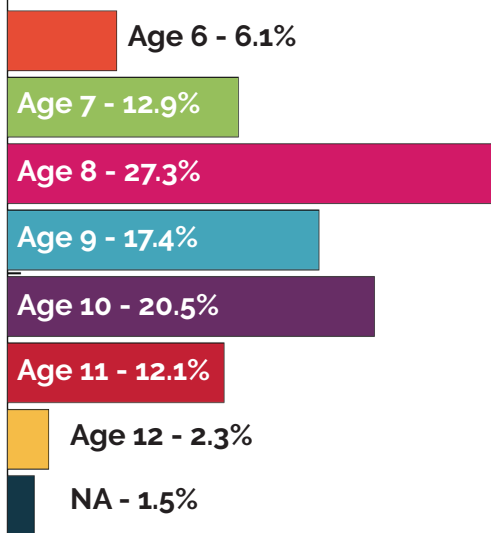
What we've heard from mentors...

Helping children become comfortable with books is so rewarding.

Experiencing progress is the greatest for them and the mentor.

Getting comfortable reading in front of a stranger is the first challenge, and then watching them take off with their own interests from there.

Ages of student participants



An inspirational Reading Together story

Clara is a 2nd-grader who meets with Ollie every Thursday to practice reading. Ollie is her Reading Together mentor.

During a recent reading session, Ollie and Clara talked about how to write a book. Motivated and inspired, Clara spent more than two hours writing a story and drawing pictures to go with it. Clara's mom says Ollie has made a big impression on her daughter.

"She's a kid who typically would rather watch cartoons than read or write on a Saturday morning... this just shows the power of mentors and representation."

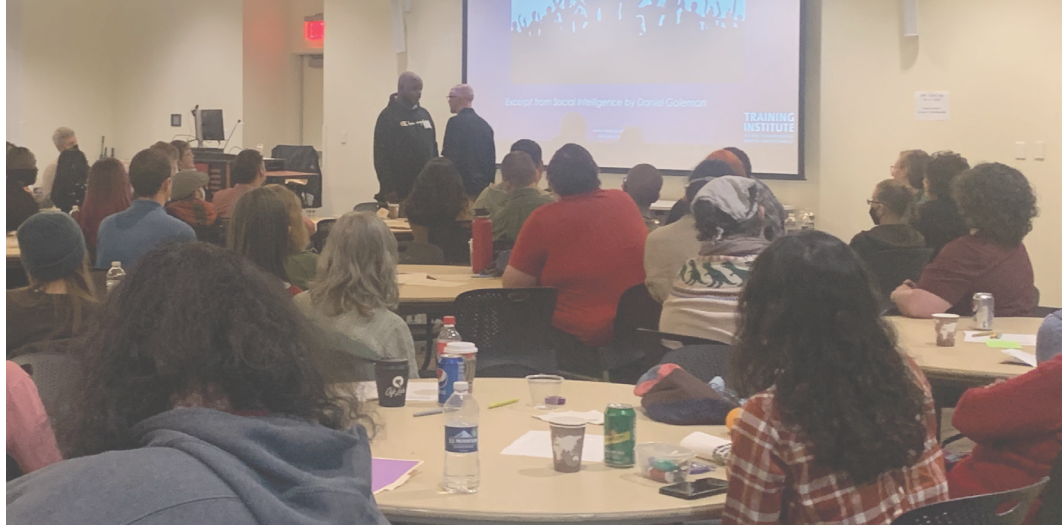
The Social Worker program follows the Library's Trauma Sensitive approach to spaces and services that are safe, welcoming, and comfortable for people of all cultures, abilities, and communities. We recognize that community members may be struggling with traumatic lived experiences, and the library is here to help.

By the Numbers

A social worker on staff offers one-to-one help to patrons in crisis and also provides information and resources to both library users and staff that address substance use, shelter, immigration, and other issues.

Staff are trained on de-escalation, situational awareness, mental health awareness, substance use disorders, difficult conversations, building resilience, and culturally responsive practice.

The Community Resource Outreach Program at George Latimer Central Library focuses on connecting unsheltered adults with service providers.



What our staff say...

Some patrons do not have family or other support to help them navigate issues such as housing or immigration paperwork. We can help.

Social workers not only support community members but support them with dignity.

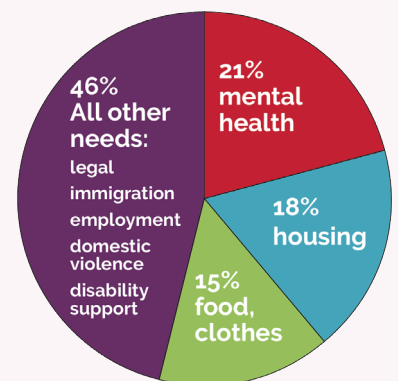
Social work in action

A mother came into the library for story time with her two children. Staff learned afterwards that she needed help in Spanish with securing housing for her family. The social worker worked with the Latinx Community Specialist, helped her fill out paperwork referrals to access free legal advice, and more.

This community member, like many who use the library, does not have family or other social support networks in Saint Paul. The library plays a crucial role connecting people to important resources. Advocacy and support for community members, and helping them navigate complex systems, is part of the Trauma Sensitive Library model.

Because of this relationship and trust that was built, she has returned to the library for help with immigration paperwork.

SUPPORT NEEDS PROVED BY SOCIAL WORKER



677

Number of times social worker consulted with library users

217

Library users referred to other community services.

91

Number of times social worker consulted with staff

463

Number of times the Community Resource Outreach Program helped library users with housing, food, health, and other needs.

Summer Spark ignites the joy of reading and engages kids, teens, and families in hands-on learning throughout the summer.

By the Numbers

Kids and teens set their own reading and learning goals and receive free books to keep. All library locations offer programs and activities for ages 0-18 all summer long. Summer Spark encourages youth to read more and prepares them to start school in September.

11,923

Free books distributed to build home libraries.

73

Events & programs where kids learned and had fun together.

2,009

Kids explored hands-on learning at a free programs

900

Take and Make kits distributed for learning at home.

27

Outdoor Story Stroll locations for families to read and discover a story together.

50%

Of participants surveyed identify as BIPOC.

“When I visit the Library, I like to...”

“Go in the teen room and chill.”

“Find books about art and coding and about endangered animals and how to make inventions.”

Check out new books I haven't seen before.”

“Find new books and read for a while. I also enjoy talking to the librarians because they are always so friendly.”



POSITIVE IMPACTS

54% read more than they usually do because of Summer Spark

41% read the same amount as they normally would

74% said Summer Spark makes reading more fun

74% hit a reading milestone and received a second free book (100% received a free book when signing up)