

Friends

of the Anoka County Library



Community Builds Strong Libraries



Strong Libraries Build Communities

Friends Membership Drive

Hundreds of people visit and use the services of Anoka County Library (ACL) every day. They may use ACL's print or electronic resources, a meeting room, a computer, or to attend programs. Friends of the Anoka County Library membership dues and volunteerism help assure ACL's continued ability to offer services, special events, and programs that enhance the library experience and enrich the lives of library users.

Over the next month, Friends of the ACL are conducting our annual membership drive. Your active involvement will help the ACL stimulate and inspire library patrons for many years to come. Joining Friends of the ACL is simple. Just fill out the [membership form](#), following the instructions on the form for payment. You may also go to the Friends page on the ACL website (<https://www.anokacountymn.gov/2680/Friends-of-the-Library>) to print the form and mail it in. You can choose your level of membership and involvement. If you have any questions, please contact the Friends at: friendsofanokaolib@gmail.com.



Creative Cupcakes for Kids!

The Friends of the Anoka County Library are excited to announce upcoming cupcake classes for ages 7 through 15. Each participant will learn cake decorating basics and create four unique cupcakes to bring home. The event cost is \$20.00, plus a small handling fee, which covers all supplies including a box to bring home your tasty treats. A portion of the fee will also raise funds for the Friends to help support ACL services. This one-session class will be offered at three different branches: Centennial (March 11), Rum River (March 25), and Northtown (April 15.) The class size is limited to 25 participants so register early! If a class minimum of 12 is not reached by two days before class, refunds will be issued. Please register here: <https://www.ticketsource.us/friends-of-the-anoka-county-library>.

Upcoming Events

Spring Booksale



Our next Friends book sale is scheduled for Saturday, May 20, at Centennial Library in Circle Pines, from 10 am-4 pm (\$5.00 bag sale is 3:30-4.) If you would like to donate gently used books to the book sale, please bring them to Centennial Library on Friday, May 19, from 1 pm-5 pm. We are especially interested in children's books and books suitable for summer "beach" reading.



Branching Out: Northtown Library

Within our Anoka County Library system, we have many wonderful branches! This column will feature a different library with each newsletter so that you can get to know a little more about each one.



With close to 74,000 people within a nine-minute drive, most of you are probably familiar with another of our Anoka County gems, Northtown Library. The original library was built in 1965. It has had several remodels, most recently in 2014, which included a spacious teen corner filled with light. The remodel also added new conference rooms and an expanded children's area. Users might need some time to find their favorite spot as the library is filled with interesting nooks and crannies that allow patrons to feel comfortable and welcome.

Art displays can be enjoyed in the space as Northtown features exhibits by local artists. The large community room is often the venue for classes, story times, scouts, or homeschool get-togethers. Some of the smaller study rooms might host a game night, quilt club, or even ballroom dancing!

With a library this size, you can imagine that the friendly staff is kept busy answering hundreds of questions each day! Northtown houses a massive microfilm collection that includes publications dating back many decades. If genealogy or local history is of interest, this is the place to be! Another unique feature at Northtown is a Legal Help Kiosk where members can attend court hearings virtually. Wireless internet and regularly updated public computers are widely used by Northtown patrons. If normal library hours at other branches don't fit your schedule, Northtown has Sunday hours from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

The Friends are grateful to the entire staff of the Northtown Library as they have hosted two of our recent book sales. We look forward to seeing them again at the Local Author Fair! As our community grows and changes, Northtown Library continues to be ahead of the curve to ensure your connection to ideas, information, and inspiration!

"Libraries store the energy that fuels the imagination. They open up windows to the world and inspire us to explore and achieve, and contribute to improving our quality of life."

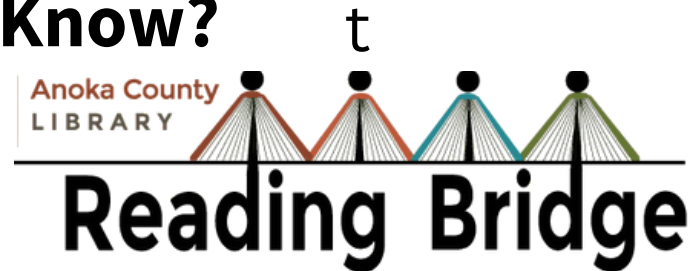
Sidney Sheldon, Author

Did You Know?

Local Author Fair

ACL will hold its Sixth Annual Local Author Fair on February 25 at Northtown Library. The fair begins at 10:15 am with a keynote address by Minnesota author, Abby Jimenez (pictured), followed by the fair at 11 am. Meet with Abby Jimenez and 16 other featured local authors selected for ACL's 2023 literary calendar. The authors will discuss their books and writing. This event is the highlight of the Winter Reads program and offers something for everyone including different genres and books for all ages of readers. No registration is required for this event. Book copies will be available for purchase directly from the authors. The Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund funds this program.

Abby Jimenez is a New York Times bestselling romance author and Food Network champion living in Minnesota. She is also the founder of Nadia Cakes, America's premier cupcake shop, which has since gone on to win numerous Food Network competitions and gained an international following.



Reading Bridge, a mentoring program to help build reading skills and confidence in students in grades 1-3 who do not read at their grade level, was rolled out to all branches last fall. 58 mentor/student pairs worked together across the county for the Fall 2022 session. 61 students registered for the winter/spring 2023 season. There are another 25 students on a waiting list.

The program needs more volunteers. The time investment for volunteer mentors is minimal, less than an hour a week. The reward is huge. One parent told library staff that before Reading Bridge, they couldn't get their son to read. Now, they can't get him to stop. They have to force him to put the books down to eat dinner, or turn off the lights and go to bed—he never stops! Another set of parents told their daughter's mentor that they "were over the moon with her progress." For more information about becoming a Reading Bridge volunteer, see [Volunteer Reading Mentors](#) on the ACL website.

Funds from the Friends were used to purchase supplies (crayons, whiteboards and markers, stickers, folders, flashcards, etc.) and literacy games like Pop! for blends and Zingo for all branches. Friends funds also funded a Reading Specialist to help train ACL staff and volunteers and provide literacy activities for each phonics skill level to use with their student.