

Leaving With Fond Memories

By Paulina Poplawska, Library Director

As I finish my final weeks at New Ulm Public Library, I have been reflecting on three years in the community. It's a wonder how fast time has passed. It feels like just yesterday that I was meeting and getting to know the Library Board, and Library and City staff and our regular patrons.

One of the things I love about the public library is that it's a community space where people meet to discover the world, have fun, learn, and develop relationships. The library is a magical place and if there's one thing that we've all learned over the last two years it's that the library is a place beyond the walls of the physical library. A second thing I enjoy is that new patrons quickly become regulars and are woven into the fabric of the library as they seek knowledge and entertainment.

Assistant Library Director April Ide, Reference Librarian Leasa Sieve, Youth Services Librarian Kathryn Tatnall and Programming and Technology Services Librarian LeRoy Harris will guide the library through this upcoming transition. I have to commend these staffers and the rest of the incredible library staff as we have pivoted and navigated the world of libraries during the pandemic. They have been phenomenal as library services reopened and returned to full capacity months ago. They have been an amazing crew to work alongside.

I'm leaving the library with one major project unfinished, which will be implemented this autumn. The flooring project is in its third year and the fiction area will see carpet replacement in a few weeks. The adult fiction section and large print section will be temporarily unavailable in our online catalog and for browsing, with the exception of new adult fiction and new large print fiction. We'll be requesting items from other libraries for about a week while the project takes place. Phases four and five of the carpet replacement are expected to continue for another two years with library reserves used to fund the updates. The second floor of fiction and the youth services area are left to complete.

Next year will see the replacement of our largest upper library roof and the Library Board will begin writing a new strategic plan. I hope you take the opportunity to share your opinion on the library services and projects that you'd like to see in the next plan.

It's been a pleasure to get to know the community and cultivate relationships through outreach at schools and senior assisted living facilities. It's been wonderful. We have an amazing community, Library Board and Library and City staff.

Your support of the library's growth has been invaluable and there are many amazing things ahead. Thank you for your investment in your public space, and thank you for letting me be part of it. I'm excited for all that is to come at New Ulm Public Library. The possibilities are boundless.

The library is located at 17 N. Broadway and is open to the public Monday to Thursdays 9:30 a.m.-8 p.m. and Friday and Saturdays 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. You can call the library at 507-359-8331.