

RIVER BLUFFS REGIONAL LIBRARY



NINTH ANNUAL REPORT

1997 – 1998

RIVER BLUFFS REGIONAL LIBRARY

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RIVER BLUFFS REGIONAL LIBRARY

BRANCHES

EASTSIDE

1904 N. Belt816-232-5479
St. Joseph, MO 64506-2201
Mon.-Thurs. 9-9, Fri.-Sat. 9-6, Sun. 1-5
Fax.....816-236-2137

DOWNTOWN

927 Felix816-232-7729
St. Joseph, MO 64501-2799
Mon.-Thurs. 9-9, Fri.-Sat. 9-6, Sun. 1-5
Reference.....816-232-8151
Reference Fax.....816-232-7516
TDD.....816-236-2160
Children's.....816-232-3812
Administrative Offices.....816-232-4038
Administrative Offices Fax.....816-279-3372

CARNEGIE

316 Massachusetts.....816-238-0526
St. Joseph, MO 64504-1449
Mon., Wed., Fri., Sat. 10-6, Tues. & Thurs. 10-7
Fax.....816-238-9438

WASHINGTON PARK

1821 N. Third.....816-232-2052
St. Joseph, MO 64505-2533
Mon., Wed., Fri., Sat. 9-5, Tues. & Thurs. 12-8
Fax.....816-236-2151

SAVANNAH

514 West Main
Savannah, MO 64485-1670.....816-324-4569
Mon., Wed., Fri., Sat. 9:30-6, Tues. & Thurs. 9:30-8
Fax.....816-324-3562

INTRODUCTION

The River Bluffs Regional Library, the cooperative service of the St. Joseph Public Library and of the Rolling Hills Consolidated Library, provides materials and services to meet the informational and recreational needs of the citizens of Andrew and Buchanan Counties in Missouri.

For the second year in a row, the Board of Trustees worked on following up on elements of a draft of a master facilities plan, prepared by Professional Library Consultants and presented in late July of 1996.

In that document, a "Most Desirable Facility Plan" spoke of renovating the Downtown Library, refocusing the service program to one floor, and moving major collections elsewhere. Moreover, the library buildings consultant recommended, at the very least, renovating and making handicapped accessible the Carnegie and Washington Park Branches. The Savannah Branch was slated for expansion. The Eastside Branch was to be relocated and expanded so that it could hold the largest portion of the system's collection.

Accordingly, a major focus of the Board of Trustees during the 1997-1998 year was on the process of selecting a firm to conduct building analyses of the Downtown, Washington Park, and Carnegie Libraries to ascertain whether it could move forward with working with these particular facilities, as opposed to exploring providing public library service in those neighborhoods at alternate sites.

While the Board of Trustees worked on facilities issues, staff continued to develop collections of materials in a variety of formats for persons of all ages and backgrounds; to encourage children and young adults to develop an interest in reading and learning through materials and services directed both to them and to their caregivers and educators; and to provide timely, accurate and useful information for users. What follows are highlights of progress made in meeting the library's goals in the context of these ongoing endeavors, which, of course, will determine the future of the library's facilities. More information is contained in monthly reports to the Board of Trustees and in the record of the monthly Board business meetings and committee meetings.

PUBLIC SERVICES

The library goal for public services is to develop and implement a program of services to meet informational and recreational needs.

In the spring of 1998, while direct public access to the Internet was being field tested, the Board of Trustees adopted as policy Guidelines for Acceptable Use of Public Internet Workstations and a Parental Release Form Authorizing the Use by Minors of Public Internet Terminals. Among other things, this policy provides that use of the Internet should be consistent with all applicable local ordinances and state, federal, and international laws. Users under the

age of 18 must first have turned in a signed parental release form, and children 8 years old and younger must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or designated caregiver while using the Internet.

The most important accomplishment during the 1997-1998 year was the implementation of direct public access to the Internet and the introduction of the library's Web page (www.rbri.lib.mo.us), which includes home pages for the branches. Prior to that time, Internet access had been available through staff-mediated searches.

The 1997 Summer Reading Program, which enrolled a record number of 2,921 children, epitomized the library's commitment to working with area public school systems to encourage children to read.

A "snapshot" look at the activity at the Eastside Branch in July of 1997 shows K - 3 story hours including Spanish stories, dinosaurs, monster poetry, and a "Whale of a Tale." Preschool story hours featured a fun fruit tasting party and a Winnie the Pooh tea party. A huge crowd turned out for a performance by musician-juggler-singer Doug Wozniak. One of the most successful programs was cartoonist Pat Marrin, who helped a group of interested cartoonists develop their own characters. Julie Love, Kindermusick instructor, gave two well-received "harmonious" story times on weather, books, and music. Storyteller Cristi Rose told some enchanting stories from around the world. Staff members gave an informative story hour on fossils and dinosaurs, during which children made their own plaster fossils to take home. An end-of-summer party with Professor I. Knowitall, a local storyteller who kept the children hooting with laughter, included cupcakes and punch, along with grabbags and prize drawings.

At the Downtown Library, the Sing-a-ling kitchen band, a 21-member group of senior citizens with homemade instruments, delighted children and adults, as well as library staff members and School District employees drawn to the music.

Displays of library materials and other items educate viewers and stimulate the use of the library. In the past year, the Savannah Branch featured mysteries, fall sports, the Lewis & Clark expedition, holiday baking, alternative medicine, hunting, birthday, and New Year's resolutions, among others. The Eastside Branch showed off exercise, vegetarianism, travel to New York, National Library Card Sign-Up Month, young adult books, desktop publishing, and Black History Month. The Downtown Library had a back-to-school theme and a focus on National Poetry Month.

A high point of the fall season was when author Cleveland Amory spoke in early November to a group of 150 people at the Missouri Western State College Fine Arts Theatre. A reception and book signing, including sales of Ranch of Dreams, followed. The event offered library Board members, Friends Board members, and other volunteers, as well as staff, an excellent opportunity to meet members of the general public interested in being informed about future plans for the River Bluffs Regional Library.

In addition to the appearance by Cleveland Amory, the Friends of the River Bluffs Regional Library also sponsored in all five facilities during Children's Book Week storyteller Kevin Mabury, who presented "Fantastic and Fractured Fairy Tales."

Some programs are replicated in all facilities. At the same time, each library offers something unique. An Express Club Activity Time at the Downtown Library began in September of 1997. In this program, parents were invited to bring their children on Wednesdays to check out library materials and participate with them in a short activity designed to demonstrate a library skill to the children. When children attended, they received an Express Club membership card, which was punched on each visit. When the card had been punched four times, the children were eligible to attend a special party for them to be held during Children's Book Week.

To celebrate September as National Library Card Sign-Up Month, at all five facilities card holders and their friends could enter a drawing to win a \$10 gift certificate from Waldenbooks. Prizes were funded by the Friends of the River Bluffs Regional Library.

Although for the most part space is not available to provide programming for adults on-site, programs can be sponsored by the library or the Friends off-site. For example, in an event sponsored by the Friends, Gayle Hull, a storyteller, appeared as Betsey, a town character in Maryville, Missouri, during the Platte Purchase Days in Savannah.

Staff stationed at various library facilities also do off-site programming for children and provide other types of outreach activities. For example, the Savannah Branch Manager spoke about books she has enjoyed to a group of the American Association of University Women in St. Joseph. Another Savannah staffer spoke to the Semper Fidelis Club, showing examples of Web sites she uses regularly in research for library customers. A Washington Park staffer presented storytimes for children at Backyard Buddies, the McCarthy Baptist Daycare, Peter Pan Preschool, and Rainbow World.

Bibliographies help focus attention on materials available on certain subjects. Throughout the year they were prepared on such topics as Christian fiction, retirement, Jewish materials, poetry, health for women in mid-life, summer reading, and Missouri tourism.

Library activities often develop around a theme celebrated throughout the state or nation. During Children's Book Week, a Dr. Seuss Read-In was held at the Eastside Branch with children having a chance to hear or read their favorite Dr. Seuss book. The Youth Services Specialist, dressed as the Cat in the Hat, read the book by the same title. Seuss films and crafts were enjoyed after the read-in. Celebrations at other branches included drawings for books.

Holidays also provide an occasion for special events. At the Savannah Library, an after-school program featured Thanksgiving stories for early elementary school-aged children. At the Washington Park Branch, an after-school program with a Thanksgiving theme was conducted for neighborhood children.

A "trip to the city" can be a real treat for youngsters who live in the outlying areas of Andrew and Buchanan Counties. Children from the Mark Twain Reading Club at the East Buchanan School made their annual visit to check out materials from the Downtown Library and to look up news on their birthdays in the *News-Press* on microfilm. They were also given a tour, and a library staffer read them an Italian Christmas story, *The Clown of God*, by Tomie De Paola.

Another special event sponsored by the Friends in early December was an appearance by storyteller Kevin Mabury, dressed in holiday finery, who presented some lively Santa stories at the Eastside Branch for a St. Nicholas Day storytime.

Service by mail, with the postage being paid both ways by the library, is available for those not able to visit a library easily. During the year, an update was prepared to the catalog of audiocassettes available by mail.

Some services are provided with the help of outside agencies. As an example, staff from the Pershing Elementary School site of Caring Communities reserve space at the Washington Park Branch to use to tutor students needing assistance. The new program, called Homework Helpers, used high school seniors as tutors of neighborhood children. During the 1997-1998 year, Homework Helpers was available on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.

Off-site services of various kinds continued. The Youth Services Specialist visited the Parkway School in St. Joseph for Artists' Day and presented three sessions of springtime puppet stories for kindergarten and first grade classes. During National Library Week, she also visited the Brookdale Presbyterian Church's Montessori School.

In the spring of 1998, at one point approximately half of the new users enrolling in library-by-mail service were participating through outreach service to the Buchanan County Jail.

Book talks were given to all fourth grade classes in Andrew County.

The Board of Trustees worked on policies relating to public services and collection development throughout the year. In the spring of 1998, they reaffirmed as policy all intellectual freedom policies adopted to date and adopted as policy "Free Access to Libraries for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights," as amended July 3, 1991 by the Council of the American Library Association. A fourth draft of Guidelines for Public Services to Minors was adopted as policy as well.

The practice of having area school children tour the Downtown Library continued in 1998.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

The library goal for collection development is to acquire and organize a wide variety of information and materials to meet informational and recreational needs.

Throughout the year, staff continued to work on refining guidelines pertaining to collection development.

In 1997-1998, all collections were weeded under the direction and coordination of the Adult Services Specialist and the Youth Services Specialist. This is in accordance with Missouri Standards for Public Library Service, which view the act of materials selection and weeding as a professional responsibility.

As an example of a new and unusual item for public dissemination, at the Eastside Branch, the Youth Services Specialist developed some new preschool concept kits with farm and dinosaur themes for circulation to daycare centers.

Poetry collections at the Eastside and Downtown Libraries were beefed up in preparation for the celebration of National Poetry Month.

The Downtown Library receives and distributes periodicals for the system, approximately 1,000 magazines monthly.

The Washington Park Branch continued to function partly as a storage facility for less-used items. This collection can meet requests submitted from the four other facilities.

PERSONNEL, TRUSTEES, VOLUNTEERS, AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The library goal for personnel and staff development is to recruit, develop, train, and retain the most competent and appropriate personnel available to perform and support the services of the River Bluffs Regional Library.

At the beginning of the year, some major changes in staffing occurred with the resignations of the Head of Public Services and the Manager of the Downtown Library. Both of these positions were filled by promotions from within. Concurrently, a new position of Adult Services Specialist was created. This job has systemwide responsibility for collection development and the selection of materials for adults, among other things.

The Code of Ethics of the American Library Association, adopted as policy by the Board of Trustees on June 11, 1996, mentions striving for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of staff, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.

Attendance by a handful of administrative staff at the annual conference of the American Library Association provided an opportunity to attend sessions on such subjects as marketing, public relations, Internet access, Friends organizations, buildings, the revision of the public library planning process, and leadership in a changing workplace.

At the national conference in Kansas City in March of 1998 of the Public Library Association, a division of the American Library Association, staff attended sessions on

marketing and publicity, Friends groups, technology, working with local book stores, imaging, staffing, regulations relating to the use of the Internet, Web page design, homeschooling resources, school-public library cooperation, child care and literacy building, after-school programming, readers' advisory services, and building and renovating libraries.

A workshop entitled "A Power Pack of Storytime Ideas," sponsored by the Kansas City Metropolitan Library Network at the Johnson County Central Resource Library, was attended by several staff in late September.

Many staff continued working on improving their skills in using the Internet.

Other workshops covered such topics as telephone etiquette, problem behavior, and other aspects of customer service. Another attended by some administrators dealt with managing multiple projects and meeting deadlines.

A new manager attended the 1997 Summer Institute sponsored by the Missouri State Library.

The fall conference of the Missouri Library Association had programs on such subjects as computer security, electronic resources, budgets, government and reference websites, collection development, and children's services.

Listservs, electronic discussion groups, greatly assisted several staff in carrying out the responsibilities of their respective jobs. Among others, there are listservs for public librarians and network administrators.

Volunteers play an integral role in carrying out the library's mission.

Fliers promoting the value of volunteers at the River Bluffs Regional Library were given to people attending a pre-retirement seminar at the Missouri Department of Transportation.

In the administrative area, work was done on revising and updating forms for volunteers, researching legal issues, and drafting guidelines for operations.

The Summer Reading Program was greatly aided by several volunteers. They also helped out in such projects as shifting books.

At the Downtown Library, a volunteer continued to work on a number of projects, including indexing obituaries and clipping newspapers.

Public recognition was awarded throughout the year to Trustees, other volunteers, and paid staff.

LeRoy H. Maxwell, Jr., president of the Board of Trustees of the River Bluffs Regional Library, was among five individuals who received Distinguished Alumni Awards at the Fifteenth Annual Awards Dinner sponsored by the Missouri Western State College Alumni Association in

October of 1997. Another recipient was Hugh A. Miner, a member of the Library Advisory Committee to the Board of Trustees. A third was Joseph Gray, a former member of the Board of Directors of the Friends of the St. Joseph Public Library.

Recognition of the library's volunteers occurred immediately prior to National Volunteer Week in April of 1998. A coupon for a gift certificate from a local book store of the volunteer's choice, a coupon for a free regularly-priced book at the Friends book sale, and a pre-designed bookmark were given to volunteers.

The Youth Services Specialist and the Assistant Manager for Children's Services at the Downtown Library were given top professional volunteer commendations by the Economic Opportunity Council for their work with Head Starts. A Washington Park staffer also received a top professional volunteer award for providing storytimes at the Washington Park Branch and at the Northside Head Start site.

There were some changes in staffing and job descriptions.

Two new professional librarians were hired for the Downtown Library.

A library assistant's position was upgraded to Assistant Manager for Circulation Services at the Downtown Library.

The job description for the director was revised by the Board of Trustees.

Both the Board and staff worked on projects at the state level.

The new Adult Services Specialist served on a panel in early April sponsored by the Center for the Book on the promotion of books, from a librarian's viewpoint.

Prior to that time, he also attended a meeting on services to senior adults sponsored by the Missouri State Library in Chillicothe.

One of the Trustees agreed to help out with a marketing plan for public libraries being coordinated by the staff of the Missouri State Library.

A retreat for the Board of Trustees was held in late January of 1998. Topics of discussion included administration/board relations; facilities and services; and funding. Copies of Virginia Young's book, *The Library Trustee*, were also distributed to Board members to aid them in their growth as Trustees.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

The library goal for administrative services is to attain and maintain the most efficient and effective utilization of human, financial, and physical resources of the River Bluffs Regional Library to carry out its mission, roles, and goals.

A change was made in the staff pension plan to allow quicker access by departing employees to their share.

At the August, 1997 business meeting, the Board of Trustees adopted an ethics code dealing with conflicts of interest as required by Section 105.484.4, RSMo.

A change in the operating budget for FY 1998 occurred when the Board of Trustees authorized an expenditure in an amount not to exceed \$100,000 in local funds to supplement the Library Services and Construction Act grants previously awarded for the implementation of a Wide Area Network for the River Bluffs Regional Library. In late August of 1997 the library was notified of the award of \$65,576 from FY 1996 Library Services and Construction Act funds for equipment for the WAN. In all, four grants made possible the purchase of most of the network equipment.

The downtown reference services staff compiled information for, and submitted online, the Biennial Survey conducted by the U.S. Superintendent of Documents. The survey requires information regarding the Federal Depository Program at the River Bluffs Regional Library.

Several administrative staff worked on developing a technology plan, partly related to applying for discounts from the federal Universal Service Fund for Schools and Libraries for telecommunications services, Internet access, internal connections, and other commercially available telecommunication services.

In another change to the staff pension plan, the Board of Trustees accepted a proposal submitted by the Mercantile Bank to implement a "balanced" approach (a cash exposure of 0%-20%, a bond exposure of 25%-40%, and an equity exposure of 35%-75%).

The director attended Library Days, sponsored by the Missouri Library Association in Jefferson City, in early February, meeting with area legislators.

At the end of April, 1998, the library received \$20,000 in U. S. Savings Bonds and a check in the amount of \$3,209.00 as the library's distribution from the trust of Alma M. Martin. Ms. Martin's trust stated that this money was being given "to the Rolling Hills Consolidated Library, to be used at the discretion of its Board of Trustees at the Savannah, Missouri Branch." The monies were deposited in the Savannah Branch building fund, pending further instructions from the library Board about their disposition.

In the late spring of 1998, the library received \$21,490 from funds provided through the federal Library Services and Technology Act for two identical microfilm reader/printers to be used for public access to census information, back issues of local newspapers, and microfilm that is borrowed from other institutions.

The St. Joseph Public Library was one of 16 charitable entities to share equally in the residue of the unitrust set up by Anna Catherine Rutt. The first check was in the amount of

\$23,624.21. According to the terms of the will, the money is "to be expended by the Board in charge of this library..."

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

The library goal for facilities and equipment is to provide and maintain appropriate, functional, and accessible facilities and equipment adequate to support the mission, roles, and goals of the River Bluffs Regional Library.

Even after eight years of operation of the cooperative service of the St. Joseph Public Library and of the Rolling Hills Consolidated Library, development continued of policies which one or the other of the two libraries might have had previously which had not yet been developed for the cooperative service. In the spring of 1997, the library Board had finalized a Procedure for the Selection of Professional Consulting Services. In the fall of 1997, the Board of Trustees spent considerable time on the process to hire a firm to conduct building analyses of the Downtown, Washington Park, and Carnegie Libraries. At its meeting in November of 1997, the Board authorized the signing of a contract with Ellison-Auxier Architects, Inc.

The building analyses were to be used to determine the costs relating to any corrective action needed to provide safe public library service in these facilities, including adherence to all codes and legal requirements. The work also was to include recommendations regarding whether or not, with current construction costs, it is advisable to remain with one or more of the facilities in question with less space, equal space, or more space on those particular sites. Information in these reports also will be used to prepare for levy elections to fund needed improvements in library facilities.

In late January of 1998, Ellison-Auxier reported that all three buildings were in good structural condition. Problems that have been caused by deterioration over time, such as moisture, need to be taken care of first. At a meeting in early June, the firm pointed out that it would be up to the Board of Trustees to determine what is most critical to them.

Several items of equipment and furniture were purchased during the year. Among them was a new modular computer desk, book shelves, and a storage cabinet for behind the adult circulation desk at the Downtown Library, greatly improving the efficiency of operations and the appearance of the area.

For the Carnegie Branch, a new water heater was purchased.

SUPPORT SERVICES

"Technical Services" includes tasks relating to acquiring, organizing, and otherwise making available resources. While most of these activities have occurred in Support Services, which currently is housed at the Eastside Branch, others are conducted at the facilities where these materials end up being located.

Marcive, a software product for processing federal documents, was received in late December of 1997. This product has changed the process of handling documents and facilitates dealing with a backlog of documents processing.

An important development occurred when discussions began in earnest about the possible digitization of certain reference materials as well as records pertaining to the history of the library.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The library goal for community relations is to communicate the availability of the wide variety of information, materials, and services of the library and to promote the ways they meet the informational and recreational needs of library users and potential users.

The Friends of the River Bluffs Regional Library continue to play an important role in promoting library services, raising funds, and acting as a corporate advocate for the library.

Early in the year, the Friends made possible a purchase of books for children with physical and mental challenges as well as books reflecting the cultural heritage of Black and Hispanic children.

At the 1997 Trails West! the Friends sponsored storyteller Susan-Sylvia Scott, who drew crowds of approximately 100 people each at two performances.

In the spring of 1998 the Friends purchased T-shirts for the staff to promote the Summer Reading Program.

The Friends membership drive and book sales also provided substantial support for the Summer Reading Program, and additional board books for a Welcome Wagon project.

Library staff continued their commitment to working with local school systems to achieve common goals, such as encouraging children to read. For example, letters from library facilities were sent to the principals of elementary and middle schools giving them information about which children in their schools had completed the Summer Reading Program. Principals were encouraged to announce publicly the names of the participants.

Many services of the library were provided by library staff in schools. In the late fall of 1997, the Youth Services Specialist attended Multiple Intelligence Day at the Eugene Field School, and presented four puppet telling performances to kindergarten and first grade classes.

She also gave a talk to the Frederick Boulevard Baptist Church's Chapter of M.O.P.S. (Mothers of Pre-Schoolers). A large and enthusiastic crowd was told about reading to their children, and given an overview of library services offered for children and their families.

Library staff also supported the community in ways less directly connected to the library itself. They increased their donation to the United Way campaign by 5% over the previous year, winning a Bronze Award.

Throughout the year the director talked about library issues and services at meetings of the St. Joseph Women's Press Club, the Buchanan County Democrats, a birthday party for civil rights activist Kelsy Beshears, meetings of the St. Joseph Area Literacy Coalition, meetings of the Downtown and Eastside Rotary Clubs, St. Joseph Symphony activities, meetings of the Government Relations Committee of the St. Joseph Area Chamber of Commerce, the Runcie Club, and the St. Joseph Downtown Association.

Recently, celebrations of National Library Week, National Volunteer Week, and Literacy Action Week have been coordinated and integrated. Staff in all facilities celebrated National Library Week with special refreshments and drawings. As mentioned earlier, in honor of National Volunteer Week, volunteers received small gifts. Displays were featured at East Hills during Literacy Information Day in April and during the late April book sale. During Literacy Action Week, staff also attended a literacy luncheon. Other staff competed in a spelling bee at Missouri Western State College to raise funds for local literacy efforts.

Another major promotional activity occurred when the Youth Services Specialist staffed an information and activity booth during the third annual Children's Festival sponsored by the St. Joseph Museum. More than 600 children came by for information, and fliers about the Summer Reading Program were distributed.

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

The library goal for interagency cooperation is to cooperate with other libraries, political subdivisions, organizations, and programs to carry out the mission, roles, and goals of the River Bluffs Regional Library both within the library's service area and beyond. This goal was carried out in a variety of ways during the 1997-1998 year.

Once again, the success of the Summer Reading Program was due in part to contributions of incentives by local businesses. For example, the Trail Theatre offered free admission to the movie *That Darn Cat* to children who had specially marked reading logs to show that they had checked out library books in the Summer Reading Program from the Downtown Library. At the time of the offer, over 200 children were enrolled, resulting in a large turn out.

Another kick-off event to promote the Summer Reading Program from the Downtown Library included a tour of the St. Joseph Museum. The museum was celebrating its 70th anniversary in 1997, and it was located in the basement of the Downtown Library during its first years of operation, in what now is Children's Services.

The United Cerebral Palsy received a grant of \$1,000 from Progressive Community Services to purchase materials relating to disabilities. One of the conditions of the grant was that a duplicate of everything acquired for the UCP library be purchased for a donation to the library.

The library Youth Services Specialist worked with UCP staff to discuss books to be selected under the grant's conditions. The Youth Services Specialist also prepared an annotated bibliography for library users and parents whose children go to UCP. Before the end of the FY 1998 year, UCP received another grant of \$2,500 to purchase two sets of the same titles to be housed at the UCP and the River Bluffs Regional Library.

The Washington Park Branch continues to be the only facility which offers space for public meetings. Tutors working with students learning to read and those pursuing a GED continue to use rooms there. The St. Joseph Literary Society also regularly met at that location throughout the year.

Continued participation by library staff in meetings and activities of the St. Joseph Youth Alliance provided many opportunities to promote library resources and services.

Downtown library staff continued their efforts to work with the teacher and fourth graders from the Neely School to help the students learn about the library and the different resources available for their projects.

Healthy Communities for the Midwest and Four Corners is an initiative of the Heartland Regional Community Foundation and Northwest Missouri State University. The Children and Youth Regional Team sub-committee have endorsed the Read from the Start program, developed by the Missouri Humanities Council, to help families and children learn the value of reading from an early age.

A pilot version of this effort was introduced at the Savannah Branch of the River Bluffs Regional Library. The sub-committee has been working on introducing the concept in other places as well. In Buchanan County, the Missouri Humanities Council has endorsed Read First, a program funded by the Missouri Western State College Foundation and led by Norma Bagnall. As a tie-in to the River Bluffs Regional Library, Dr. Bagnall distributed books to each branch of the library for those who have completed the program to pick up. Patrons were also able to go to any branch and have a tour of the library as well. Library staff were to give participants information about storytimes and other programs for children. The Youth Services Specialist has continued to represent the library in Healthy Communities, whose goals are communities where, among other things, "our children are nurtured" and "where education, the arts, and recreation are inspired," where "business, organizations, and people work as partners to create a desired future for those who live in our communities."

At its monthly business meeting in April of 1998, the Board of Trustees passed a motion to endorse the preparation of a proposal to seek a grant of state funds to study the feasibility of integrating three types of services in the North Side of St. Joseph [the development of a Community Opportunity Center, a health and wellness center (also an initiative from Healthy Communities), and public library services] and the director's involvement in the writing of the proposal.

A unique perspective for all was provided when in late April of 1998, as part of the Downtown Rotary's Group Study Exchange, the director hosted a Japanese Rotarian, who works

in a public library which has the highest circulation in Japan, and tours of River Bluffs facilities and the library and computer center at Missouri Western State College. During the tour, the guest noted that six Japanese cities could fit into the geographic area between the Eastside and Savannah Branches of the River Bluffs Regional Library.

STATISTICS

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>FY 1997-1998</u>
Local tax income	\$2,055,379
State aid	45,146
Federal grant	136,773
Other	<u>166,057</u>
TOTAL	\$2,403,355*

<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	
Personnel	\$1,342,288
Collection	346,977
Operations	<u>732,245</u>
TOTAL	\$2,421,510*

*Pre-audited figures submitted to the Missouri State Library at the end of the fiscal year. For audits of the River Bluffs Regional Library, the St. Joseph Public Library, and the Rolling Hills Consolidated Library, please contact the office of the director.

Population served:	97,715
Registered borrowers:	37,432
Total circulation:	668,472
Annual number of library visits:	208,000
Annual number of reference transactions:	47,944
Annual children's program attendance:	16,585
Total number of children's program:	617

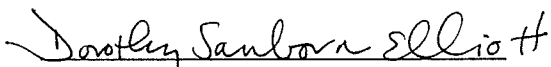
THE FUTURE

In the 1997-1998 year, the building analyses done on the Downtown, Washington Park, and the Carnegie Libraries gave the Board of Trustees, the staff, and the community important

information. With the work done by the library buildings consultant two years earlier, they provide strong building blocks for a proposal to be taken to the voters before the year 2000.

Much work remains to be done on the selection of a site for the replacement of the Eastside Branch, the preparation of a building program for the Savannah Branch, and refinement of work to be done in the three facilities covered by the building analyses.

This effort will require the continued strong support and involvement of the Board of Trustees, other volunteers, the staff, and members of the general public. We have made a good start to take us into the next millennium.


Dorothy Sanborn Elliott
Director
St. Joseph, MO

Staff Administrative Council
and
Board of Trustees

