

**State Librarian's Excellence Award Nomination
Submitted by the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library Board
September 2005**

NEW AND IMPROVED SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY

Cup and Chaucer Coffee Bar offers a place to meet friends, read, or just relax and enjoy refreshments. The library partnered with the Arnold Center, an employment and training organization for persons with special needs, to open a coffee bar in the library in September 2004. Local Foundations provided funding and the Arnold Center, the staffing.

Teen Spot, designed with input from teens, is an inviting place for them to study, socialize, and relax. The Friends of the Library provided funding to remodel an area in the library for the teen collection, computers, and study area.

Evening Baby Story Times were added based on requests from the community. Working parents have responded favorably to evening baby story times.

Web Based Automated Catalog provides additional features such as reviews and book covers. Patrons were provided with instructional signs and handouts to assist them with the transition to the web based catalog. The library scheduled hands-on workshops to instruct patrons on how to conduct searches on web-based catalogs. More workshops are planned for patrons in September 2005.

Automated Telephone Service enables patrons without Internet in their homes to access their account information at their convenience. Patrons can call the 24/7 automated service to review items on loan, overdues or holds, renew materials, access their account for fines and fees, and delete pending hold requests.

Additional Databases provide accurate and reliable information remotely and in the library. Databases added during this past year include: Antiques Reference, Maps 101, Heritage Quest, CultureGrams, and LitFinder.

Wireless Internet will expand the access to the Internet in the library. Funding is available this fiscal year to provide wireless Internet services.

PARTNERSHIPS IN THE COMMUNITY

The cooperative effort with the Arnold Center in developing and opening a coffee bar in the library in September 2004 has resulted in positive community feedback and a successful first year for the Cup and Chaucer. Six Foundations and Community Mental Health contributed the funding for construction and start up costs.

Other community partners have worked with the library to provide educational programs and to enhance library services this past year.

- The **Give Me Shelter Arts Education, Community Mental Health** co-sponsored a poetry reading in the Cup and Chaucer during National Library Week 2005.

- ARC, an organization that works with the developmentally disabled, coordinated with the library a program featuring author Jodee Blanco discussing her book on bullying in schools.
- Michigan Molecular Institute, a research facility in Midland, partnered with the library for science presentations during National Library Week 2005. The scientists did experiments with the students and demonstrated various scientific principles.
- The library collaborated with UNICEF to provide a story time about children around the world.
- Midland AARP provided knowledgeable volunteers to offer tax assistance during the tax season to patrons coming to the library to pick up forms.
- Teen volunteers are screened through the Voluntary Action Center. The volunteers assist staff during the Summer Reading Program.
- The library worked with the Midland Center for the Arts to put together the Picture Parent Program for the local schools. The Center also brought traveling science exhibits and volunteer docents to the library during National Library Week 2005.
- The library co-sponsored with the Midland Daily News an appearance by author Mary Madden in May 2005. She wrote a book in installments in the paper.

COMMITMENT TO CUSTOMER SERVICE

Patrons are provided with forms to submit suggestions for the collection and to comment on services. These forms are available in the library's lobby, the coffee bar, and adult services and youth services areas. Patrons may also submit comments to the library's email address.

The comments received and responses to the comments are communicated in several ways:

- Patron comments and concerns are reviewed and answered at the televised Library Board meetings.
- Library Board meetings are re-broadcast several times in the week following the Board meeting.
- The responses to the comments are provided in the Board minutes that are posted on the Library's website.
- When requested by the patron, the Library Director will contact them about their comment.
- A "Frequently Asked Question" section is published in the library newsletter. Library Board members write the responses to these questions. The questions are archived on the library's website.

The library staff strives to respond to patron needs by being prepared.

- Communication among staff about library services and activities has been improved by providing access to email to all staff this past year. Keeping staff informed has improved their ability to represent the library and answer questions.
- During construction of the Teen Room, staff worked together to ensure easy accessibility to materials. Signage was developed to help alert patrons of material location changes.
- With three floors, it is challenge to communicate with other staff in a timely manner. Staff is equipped with walkie-talkies to help notify other staff of patron needs.
- Annual safety training and attention to building safety gives staff the confidence that they need to act in an emergency. In a recent fire emergency, staff evacuated the building quickly and calmly.