

You **Believe** in Your Community.
You **Invest** in Your Library.

Here's how your support makes a difference.





You **invest** in The Friends.
The Library becomes a place **for all**
to thrive.



A 15-year-old boy walked into Sun Ray Library on a Thursday in August. He was not picking out a book; he was trying to find a way to go to school again. This boy was experiencing homelessness and needed help enrolling in a nearby alternative school.

Fortunately, the boy met Ruby Rivera, a social worker contracted to work at four Saint Paul Public Library branches. Ruby worked with him to determine a plan and even went with him to the school to help fill out paperwork and talk with school administrators on his behalf. He's now successfully enrolled and aims to graduate.



Ruby Rivera
Social Worker for Saint Paul Public Library

Adding a social worker to its team is part of Saint Paul Public Library's strategy to elevate service to patrons by becoming "trauma-sensitive." People throughout our city experience trauma in various forms and many seek support at their local libraries. When staff are equipped to respond to individuals experiencing a crisis situation, they can better meet their needs.

According to Ruby, this means understanding that each individual's actions are a direct result of their own unique life experiences.

Being trauma-sensitive means a shift from asking "What's wrong with you?" to "What has happened to you?"

Using an approach like this, the Library can serve patrons from a place of compassion, empathy, and effectiveness. Staff can prevent potential problems from escalating and improve lives by connecting individuals with available resources.

What Does the Library Social Worker Do?

The Library social worker helps patrons:

- find resources for childcare, domestic abuse, or immigration concerns;
- navigate complicated systems like housing, healthcare, and legal;
- learn tools to manage relationships, health and wellness, or grief.

The Library social worker helps Library staff:

- learn skills to be trauma-sensitive;
- handle or evaluate specific situations;
- practice self-care and set emotional boundaries.

How Does Saint Paul Public Library Become Trauma-Sensitive?

1. The Library has contracted Ruby Rivera, a licensed social worker, through the Wilder Foundation to serve four Library locations: Arlington Hills, Rice Street, Rondo, and Sun Ray.
2. Library staff participate in extensive training around serving patrons who have experienced trauma.
3. The Library will evaluate patron and staff member experiences throughout this pilot project and implement successful approaches into ongoing staff development.



The Friends' advocacy work makes this possible.

Last year, The Friends helped secure public funding for the social worker position by working with City leadership through our annual advocacy process. The Friends secured two grants (one from the Hugh J. Andersen Foundation and the other from Library Services and Technology Act) to support this important pilot program.

The combination of these financial commitments, along with the ongoing support of Friends donors, is an example of the successful public-private partnership that you help make possible.

Donor Perspective:

Why I Give to The Friends

“My family moved from a small Central Minnesota town to Duluth when I was in sixth grade. Leaving a home with extended family and friends that I loved was traumatic at that age, and I felt extremely alone.

I found a tiny library just two blocks from my new house, and it became my safe space. Through the library and the librarians, I was encouraged to read and challenged to learn new things. But I was also embraced in kindness and the calmness of the space. The library was my safe home through all those years growing up.

I've lived in Saint Paul now for years and still go to the library at least twice a week. My favorite days are days I go to the library.

The libraries have been – and remain – crucial in my life and to my emotional well-being. Because of libraries I felt safety in the world. I give to The Friends as a kind of emotional repayment.

I hope kids today find the same safety, comfort, and reading skills in the library that have meant so much to me.”

- Judy

Friends donor and member of The Briggs Circle (*donors who have chosen to remember The Friends in their will*)





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You make your
community stronger.

Your investment in The Friends helps libraries
strengthen and inspire their communities.

Thank you for your belief and your support.

thefriends.org

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