

# Mukwonago Community Library

## Materials Selection Policy

### Approved 15 December 2016

This materials selection statement is a reflection of Mukwonago Community Library's ongoing commitment to provide a great collection on diverse topics in various formats. A document stating the goals, objectives, and background of the library collection, along with policies for selection and maintenance of the collection, is needed to provide the structure for meeting our commitment to provide a well—rounded collection.

The Vision and Mission Statements of the Mukwonago Community Library guide the selection of materials as well as the development and allocation of resources.

**Mission:** The Mukwonago Community Library is committed to:  
Engaging, Empowering, and Enriching Your World

**Goals:** The Mukwonago Community Library will:

1. provide the materials, programs, and services needed to meet library users recreational needs;
2. provide the information services needed to answer their personal and work-related questions
3. enable them to develop their ability to find and use information in a variety of formats
4. assist them to continue growing and learning throughout their lives.

The Library supports the user's right to have access to ideas and information representing all points of view. The selection of any title does not constitute endorsement of its contents. The library recognizes that many materials are controversial and that any given item may offend a user. Decisions are not made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the title in relation to building the collection and serving user interests. In keeping with the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights* (Addendum 1), *Freedom to Read* (Addendum 2) statements, Mukwonago Community Library does not restrict access to library materials.

## Objectives

Mukwonago Community Library's primary objectives are to acquire, organize and make available print, non-print and digital materials which include works of contemporary significance and enduring value. MCL staff is guided by a sense of responsibility to the library user to offer materials which inform, educate, entertain and enrich. The library also recognizes an immediate duty to offer materials for enlightenment and recreation, even though such materials may not

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Approved: 15 December 2016

have enduring interest or value. The collection is not archival. It is reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis to meet contemporary needs.

New formats shall be considered for the collection when national surveys and local requests indicate a significant portion of the Mukwonago Community Library's users express an interest in and/or has the necessary technology to make use of the format. Availability of items in the format, cost per item, and the library's ability to handle the items will also be factors in determining when a new format will be collected. Similar considerations will influence deletion of a format from the collection.

## **Responsibility for Selection**

Ultimate responsibility for the selection of library materials rests with the Library Director who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Library Board of Trustees. Those staff members who are qualified by reason of education, training, or experience share this responsibility. Managers of Adult & Reference Services, Youth Services and Technical Services oversee the selection process and ensure that choices reflect the *Materials Selection Policy of Mukwonago Community Library*. The supervisors make appropriate selection tools available and track the materials budget to ensure a flow of new materials throughout the year, according to budget allocation. Suggestions from staff members who are not directly involved with selection and library users are encouraged and given serious consideration in the selection process.

## **Criteria for Selection**

Selection is a discerning and interpretive process, involving a general knowledge of the subject and its important literature, a familiarity with the materials in the collection, and recognition of needs of the community.

Selection of materials will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the basis of the principles stated in this policy. Responsibility for choosing what a user selects rests with the user. The library believes that parents (or legal guardians) have the sole right and responsibility to restrict access of their own children to library resources.

Selection and evaluation of materials, whether purchased or donated to the library, is done from reviews in professional journals, popular magazines, newspapers, the nonprint media, subject bibliographies and recommended lists, publishers' catalogs, staff and user requests, and professional websites. Standard tools used may include Library Journal, Booklist, Baker and Taylor's Forecast, The New York Times Book Review, School Library Journal, Horn Book, and BookPage.

## **User Requests**

The library encourages and welcomes user suggestions, comments and ideas about the collection and its development. High priority will be given to purchase requests from users. All user requests are subject to the same selection criteria as materials purchased by library staff. Reasons for not purchasing items include obsolescence, lack of availability, narrow subject area, price, and misinformation. The library determines where the item will be located in the collection. The "Purchase Request" sample form is included in this plan as Addendum 3.

## **Donations and Gifts**

Donations of materials are gratefully accepted with the understanding that the Library may add them to the collection if they meet the established standards for purchased materials. Specific emphasis is given to currency, physical condition, and need. A magazine subscription represents an ongoing commitment for a library and as such does not lend itself to being acquired on a gift basis. For this reason, magazine subscriptions are not accepted as gifts, but will be considered for purchase by the library. All gifts added to the collection must be donated with no restrictions and must be available for public use. Materials not added to the collection will be placed in the book sale, used as prizes and incentives for reading, or disposed of by other means. The library cannot place a monetary value on gifts for tax purposes, but receipts are provided upon request.

Gifts of funds are welcome and may be designated as memorials. Gifts of non-library materials ordinarily will not be accepted.

## **Donations from Local and Self-published Authors**

Local authors are defined as current residents of Waukesha County and Walworth County, Wisconsin. In general, the library does not collect self-published materials from non-Waukesha County or non-Walworth County residents.

Mukwonago Community Library greatly appreciates local authors who are willing to support the Library by donating their works. However, the Library is not able to add all donated material to the collection. Works must meet the selection standards as established in the Materials Selection Policy. Criteria includes professional reviews, author qualifications and community demand. Reader reviews on Amazon or similar sites are not considered as part of the review process. The Library does not purchase unsolicited materials.

Attempts are made to acquire titles by local authors who are published by mainstream publishers. Titles that are self-published may be added to the collection if there is a compelling reason to do so. This may include community interest, professional reviews or publicized via local media.

All donated materials become property of the Mukwonago Community Library and undergo examination by Library staff prior to placement in the collection. If a donation is not selected for the collection, it will be placed in the book sale.

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Approved: 15 December 2016

If a donation is added to the collection, it may not remain there in perpetuity and may be removed as part of ongoing collection maintenance.

## **Withdrawal of Materials**

An up-to-date, attractive and useful collection is maintained through a continual discarding and replacing process. Materials may be withdrawn from the library after consideration any of or all of the following factors:

- physical condition
- currency and accuracy of information
- lack of use
- newer editions or better material on the same subject

Materials withdrawn from the collection may be given to the book sale or disposed of by other means.

## **Requests for Reconsideration**

The choice of library materials by users is an individual matter. While an individual may reject materials for oneself, one cannot exercise censorship to prevent access to the materials by others. Parents (or legal guardians) have the sole right and responsibility to restrict access of their own children to library resources. Once an item has been approved for purchase, based on the selection policy, the item will not be automatically removed upon request. The Library recognizes that a diversity of materials may result in some requests for reconsideration, the following procedures have been developed to ensure that objections or complaints are handled in an attentive and consistent manner.

Any user objecting to library material should receive respectful attention from the staff member first approached. The staff member should contact an in-house librarian or the Library Director for assistance. If the user is not satisfied with the explanation, the user should be offered the *Request for Reconsideration* (Addendum 4) form.

1. A *Request for Reconsideration* form must be fully completed and routed to the Library Director. The Library Director may respond in writing to the user, advising him/her that there will be a reconsideration of the item and enclose a copy of the Materials Selection Policy of the Mukwonago Community Library.
2. The Library Director will meet with the appropriate staff member to review the complaint. The Library Director may appoint an ad hoc committee to review the item in question.
3. The Library Director will communicate the decision, along with the reasons for it, in writing to the user who initiated the request.

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Approved: 15 December 2016

4. If the user desires further action; he/she may appeal in writing to the Library Board of Trustees.
5. The Library Board of Trustees may permit a hearing. If a hearing is granted, the user will be notified of when he/she may address the Board. The Board reserves the right to limit the length of the presentation at the hearing. The Board will determine whether the request for reconsideration has been handled in accordance with stated policies and procedures of the Mukwonago Community Library. On the basis of this determination, the Board may vote to uphold or override the decision of the Library Director. The Library Board President will communicate the Library Board's decision in writing to the user. The Mukwonago Community Library Board of Trustees serves as the final authority and arbiter on matters of reconsideration.

### **Revision History**

- March 2014:** Policy updated/created but not formally approved
- 15 December 2016** Policy reviewed and reformatted to standard policy format.  
Content revised throughout by MCL staff. “Freedom to Read” and “Library Bill of Rights” statements were not changed.  
“Patron” and “Patrons” changed to “User” and “Users” throughout document  
Paragraph 1 of “Objectives” completely rewritten  
Paragraph 5 of the Request for Reconsideration was updated with the sentence “The Mukwonago Community Library Board of Trustees serves as the final authority and arbiter on matters of reconsideration.”  
Addendum numbering corrected  
Grammatical errors corrected

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Approved: 15 December 2016

## Addendum 1

### Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries that make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

A history of the Library Bill of Rights is found in the latest edition of the *Intellectual Freedom Manual*.

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Approved: 15 December 2016

## Addendum 2

### Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change.

And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of

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Approved: 15 December 2016

limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested, Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought.

The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

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Approved: 15 December 2016



There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major

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Approved: 15 December 2016

channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

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This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972', January, '16, 1991', July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

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**Addendum 3**

**Purchase Request**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Staff initials:** \_\_\_\_\_

Book

DVD

CD

**Author/Artist:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Year published/released/edition:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ISBN:** \_\_\_\_\_

**User Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Library Card #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Addendum 4

### Request for Reconsideration

Your opinion is important to us. If you have an objection to library material(s), please complete this form, indicating as clearly and legibly as possible the nature of your objection. Upon completion, this form becomes a matter of public record: (Wisconsin Statutes 19-32).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Resource of concern:

- Book     DVD/Blu-ray     Audiobook     Magazine  
 Library Program     Display     Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. Title of the resource: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Author/Producer of the resource: \_\_\_\_\_

4. What brought this resource to your attention? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Have you read/listened/viewed the entire resource?     Yes     No

6. Please comment on the resource as a whole as well as being specific about those issues that concern you. (Please continue on back of this form if you need more space or attach additional pages)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What action do you recommend the library take regarding this item?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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