



The Library of Congress designated The Friends as Minnesota's Center in 2012, and in that role The Friends promotes reading, literacy, and libraries. Today, the Minnesota Center for the Book is an essential partner to libraries, schools, community organizations, and independent readers statewide. In 2020, we responded to requests and adapted our programming to help:

- Lift up and celebrate the creative stories of all Minnesotans during challenging times
- Amplify the essential role and resources of public libraries across Minnesota
- Create bridges for conversation between writers of color and diverse readers across the state
- Support social-emotional learning and build real connections among all Minnesota readers

The MN Center for the Book received its first legislative appropriation in 2017. The \$125,000 annual legislative appropriation in 2019 and 2020 has done far more than we could have possibly imagined when renewed funding was approved two years ago. **We respectfully ask the Governor and Minnesota State Legislature to renew this appropriation** through an FY22 and FY23 Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund Legacy appropriation so that we may provide ongoing continuity and connection for young people and adults across the state during a time of uncertainty and isolation. **This small but mighty investment has directly served more than 60,000 people in 2020** alone.

While *many* programs serving schools and libraries statewide are funded through this appropriation, two major initiatives are highlighted here for your review:



At the request of libraries, community education staff, parents, and educators, we created **One Book One Minnesota** in April in response to the pandemic. In June, we re-imagined One Book One Minnesota again following the murder of George Floyd to create a forum for brave conversations about race and racism in Minnesota. First Lady Gwen Walz has championed this project, after serving as Honorary Chair and featured speaker of the MN Book Awards in 2019. One Book One Minnesota has – in just a few months – become a central part of our work as the state's Center for the Book, and a nationally-recognized model for how to create and run a meaningful statewide book club. The program has garnered 52,000 reading experiences by Minnesotans spanning 86 of 87 counties!

First Chapter: *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo

- Reading Period April 13 – June 7, 2020
- **21,048 free views on EBooks Minnesota from 84 counties**
- May 20, 2020 Conversation Event with Kate DiCamillo had 2,399 registrations for the online event. They hailed from 47 states and three foreign countries. Day of, there were 1,920 viewers, with nearly 1,000 additional views of the event via YouTube in the days since.

- *From a teacher: "I'm so thankful for the creative souls that thought to bring people together through this opportunity. I'm thankful for the people with the organizational skills to make it happen. I'm thankful for authors who can provide words of hope. I'm thankful for a community of readers."*

Second Chapter: *A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota*, edited by Sun Yung Shin

- Reading Period June 15 – August 23, 2020
- **22,997 free views on EBooks Minnesota from 82 counties**
- More than 1,800 people reached through statewide programming.
- August 20, 2020 Event with editor Sun Yung Shin and contributors Taiyon Coleman, David Lawrence Grant, Shannon Gibney, Carolyn Holbrook, IBé, and Andrea Jenkins had 401 attendees, with 700 additional views of the event via YouTube in the days since.
- From the 118 respondents to the survey, 91% of them had talked to friends or family about the book and 97% said that they felt the experience had helped them value the views and roles of others.

Third Chapter: *The Plague of Doves* by Louise Erdrich

- Reading Period, November-December, 2020
- **6,011 book views on EBooks Minnesota and 2,158 free audiobook downloads from 67 counties** (this is the first chapter to be available in audiobook format)
- 713 Minnesota residents registered for the December 8 Conversation Event with National Book Award Winner and Pulitzer Prize finalist Louise Erdrich (445 real-time attendees and 80+ views since).

Moving Words: Writers Across Minnesota

This year, Moving Words went virtual, with libraries in 11 communities each hosting four Minnesota Book Award finalists and winners in discussion about their work. Local residencies included both school students and library patrons. We plan to return to in person residencies in 2021, but the program adapted well to its virtual environment and geography disappeared as a barrier to participation.

Fall 2020 (Virtual) Moving Words Tour:

Sept 10 – Park Rapids	Sept 15 – Montgomery	Sept 17 – Roseau
Sept 26 – Center City	Oct 1 – Crookston	Oct 6 – Litchfield
Oct 22 – Worthington	Oct 26 – Perham	Nov 5 – Grand Rapids
Nov 12 – Rochester	Nov 17 – Little Falls	

Fall 2019 (In Person) Tour: 12 communities reached: 309 public library attendees; 1,792 student attendees at 13 school visits.

Contact information: Beth Burns, President, beth@thefriends.org | 612-802-2877 (cell) | <https://thefriends.org/minnesota-center-for-the-book/>