

A UNIQUE WAY FOR LIBRARIES TO RAISE THE FUNDS THEY NEED

MADISON, WISC – We all know how challenging fundraising can be. And yet Library Friends, staff and volunteers pitch in to raise the funds needed for programs, collections, updated technology and the variety of services that public libraries provide.

Sometimes a \$100 donation to help provide a guest author or for a new service can seem like a real bonus. Sometimes millions of dollars are needed to build a new library or expand and restore an existing one. While all contributions are deeply appreciated, what does a public library do when funds are needed to ensure a growing and lasting impact on a community?

The Watertown Public Library turned to a unique Wisconsin-based crowd sourcing organization to help launch their \$10,000,000 campaign for a restored and expanded library. Was it successful? One campaign contributor put it this way:

“The Watertown Public Library started a campaign with the goal of finding 100 extraordinary women to help them reach their fundraising goal of \$100,000. A total of 179 women pledged to their campaign—resulting in a total of **\$179,000 raised**. Then these women served as ambassadors for the library and the campaign throughout our community. It has been wonderful working with everyone on this... What a group of hard working dedicated women with a clear vision!” The campaign has now raised \$9,500,000 and will reach its goal soon. And it all started with women.

The crowdfunding website that the Watertown Public Library used is called 100 Extraordinary Women (<https://100extraordinarywomen.com/>). It features a simple interface to help non-profits set up and manage their own campaigns. Creating a fundraising campaign can be accomplished in three simple steps: (1) Complete the simple online registration, (2) Submit a project and select a fundraising goal of \$10,000 or \$100,000, and (3) Connect an automated payment processing system (in this case, STRIPE) to receive funds directly from donors. The 100EW Team can help with this process.

The Milton Public Library also exceeded their fundraising goals through the assistance of 100 Extraordinary Women. “What began with 15 supporters quickly grew to 155 women who each pledged \$1,000 for an expanded library that will serve our community for generations,” said Milton Public Library’s recently retired Library Director Lisa Brooks.

Brooks says that each woman who donated to the library now has her name - or the name of someone she wanted to honor or remember – cleverly displayed in their new Children’s Storytime Area.

“This was a fun and easy way to launch our capital campaign, which raised more than \$2,800,000 for our beautiful new library,” said Brooks.

Other communities have also used this unique vehicle to raise needed library funds or to launch a capital campaign, including Evansville, Sparta and Belleville.

About 100 Extraordinary Women

100 Extraordinary Women has helped raise millions of dollars for charitable organizations like Milwaukee Soldiers Home, the Fine Arts Foundation of the Westby Area, the Al. Ringling Theatre, several Wisconsin-based public libraries, and RE:new, a Chicago-based non-profit that gives hope to refugee women. More information can be found at <https://100extraordinarywomen.com/about>