



The Bremer
Rural Libraries
and Literacy
Leadership
Institute

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

**For more information, call
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Otto Bremer Foundation Supports 2nd Year of Institute for Rural Libraries and Literacy Organizations

Program aims to build capacity for rural libraries and literacy organizations in Western Wisconsin

SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA – August 2013 – The Otto Bremer Foundation and Library Strategies, a consulting group of The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library, announce the second year of “L³: *The Rural Libraries and Literacy Leadership Institute.*”

L³ is a training program launching in western Wisconsin in August 2013. The program was piloted last year to great success with 12 libraries and literacy organizations in Minnesota. The program is designed and presented through a partnership of Library Strategies and the Minnesota Literacy Council.

Participating in the 10-month program are western Wisconsin public libraries in Amery, Ashland, Dresser, Frederic, Menomonie and La Crosse County, and the following literacy organizations: Buffalo Pepin Literacy Alliance in Durand, Hope Academy in La Crosse, ICAA Crossroads Literacy in Ladysmith, **Literacy Volunteers of Chippewa Valley in Eau Claire**, Northern Waters Literacy in St. Croix Falls, and WestCAP Literacy Program in Glenwood City. The public libraries in the St. Croix Falls area and Buffalo County will also participate in affiliation with their neighboring literacy organization. Three individuals from these twelve organizations will participate in an intensive period of training and mentoring designed to expand their capacity for meeting the unique needs of rural communities.

“Libraries and literacy programs are gateways to opportunity, especially in rural communities,” said Charlotte S. Johnson, a Foundation trustee. “Working to deepen and broaden the leadership capacity of these organizations will serve our vision of helping to build and maintain healthy and vibrant communities.”

Offered at no cost to participant organizations, the L³ Institute focuses on critical aspects of running a rural library or literacy organization, from budgeting and board development to strategic planning and cultural competency. Because rural organizations usually have very few staff members, it is often difficult for their lead staff to attend training programs. To supplement the in-person trainings, each organization is paired with a mentor who will support them for the next 10 months.

L³ was created in response to research conducted by the Otto Bremer Foundation on ways to strengthen rural communities. Their research indicates that a focus on libraries and literacy has potential to create a broad, positive impact on smaller communities. The Otto Bremer Foundation provided \$484,170 to Library Strategies to conduct the second year of the Institute in Wisconsin.

For additional information about L³: The Rural Libraries and Literacy Leadership Institute, contact Stu Wilson, Library Strategies Coordinator, at 651/287-0060 or email: stu@thefriends.org; or Eric Nesheim, Minnesota Literacy Council, 651/645-2277x202 or email: enesheim@mnliteracy.org.

About the Otto Bremer Foundation

Created in 1944, the Otto Bremer Foundation assists people in achieving full economic, civic and social participation in and for the betterment of their communities. This mission is based on the intent of founder Otto Bremer. His vision and longstanding commitment to communities during and after the Great Depression are carried forward today through the Foundation's work in the places that are homes and neighbors to Bremer banks. The Foundation strives to help build healthy, vibrant communities—communities where basic needs are met, mutual regard is prized and opportunities for economic, civic and social participation are within everyone's reach.

The Otto Bremer Foundation owns 92 percent of Bremer Bank, and receives an equivalent share of the bank profits that are paid out as dividends. This means that a large portion of bank profit is invested back in local communities through grants and program-related investments. For more information, visit www.ottobremer.org.

About Library Strategies and The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library

Library Strategies is a consulting group of The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library that provides services to libraries and library organizations across the country and internationally. Library Strategies consultants are library leaders and other experts who offer services in the areas of organizational growth and strategic planning, fundraising, Friends and foundations, advocacy training and other focus areas critical to these organizations.

Currently celebrating its 67th year, The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library is a private, nonprofit membership organization which supports the Saint Paul Public Library through private fundraising, advocacy, cultural programming and public awareness activities. For more information, contact The Friends at 651-222-3242 or visit www.thefriends.org

About the Minnesota Literacy Council

The Minnesota Literacy Council is a non-profit organization that shares the power of learning so all Minnesotans have the opportunity to be successful students, workers, family members and community citizens. Their literacy-rich preschools and summer reading programs start young readers off on the right foot. The literacy council's free English, GED preparation and job-readiness classes prepare adults for post-secondary education and careers. Minnesota Literacy Council helps build the capacity of other literacy programs through sharing best practices and educational technology, conducting volunteer trainings, and running a national service program that strengthens hundreds of literacy programs. For more information, visit www.mnliteracy.org.