

News Release

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Pablo Foundation Paving Way for Library Expansion with \$750,000 Gift, Invites Others to Support the Project

The L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library in Eau Claire and its \$7 Million Story Builder expansion campaign are excited to officially recognize a \$750,000 pledge from the Pablo Foundation. This gift is the largest pledge the library has received to date, and it brings project funding to 77% of the total cost.

The City of Eau Claire is investing \$11.5 Million to revamp the library's failing mechanical systems while the Story Builder campaign is raising an additional \$7 Million in private funds to expand the library's physical space—a long overdue effort to meet the demands of Eau Claire's ever-growing and evolving population.

Founded in late 2017, the mission of the Pablo Foundation is to create a model for a healthy and sustainable community. A driving force behind many of Eau Claire's recent development projects, the foundation is focused on housing, health, education, and the arts.

Pablo Foundation Executive Director MaiVue Xiong says, "The Pablo Foundation seeks to fund projects that will create the greatest amount of impact for the wider Eau Claire area. This includes the number of lives impacted as well as the longevity of the impact. The library touches so many people's lives, and it doesn't really matter who you are. It doesn't matter your age, race, or where you came from. It doesn't really matter how you fit into this community. Somehow, in some shape or form, the library is going to impact people living here."

As part of their gift, the Pablo Foundation has secured name recognition for an expanded front entrance which will provide a welcoming, safe atmosphere. The funds will be paid to the library in annual installments over the next seven years.

The Pablo Foundation has also joined forces with the RCU Foundation and two anonymous donors to challenge the community to match their total gifts of \$1.5 Million before the end of the year. Reconstruction to upgrade the library's infrastructure—funded by the city's \$11.5 Million investment—will begin in the spring of 2021. It's imperative to raise the additional \$7M this year so expansion work can happen at the same time.

Library Director Pamela Westby says, "We're so honored to gain major support from an organization like the Pablo Foundation, which does such important, impactful work across the city. They've already made this community a better place to live, and we feel our plans for the library are a perfect fit for their mission."

Speaking to the project's public-private funding model, Xiong says, "For the Foundation, knowing that the City has committed over \$11 Million to support the project—and it arrived at that figure through various studies—makes us more comfortable that the project will be economically sustainable for the long-haul. We want organizations to do their homework and due diligence before we commit to funding them, and we believe the library has done that."

Library expansion plans include full ADA compliance, ensuring equal access for all; more accessible shelving space for books, movies, and more, featuring better display options and less reliance on difficult-to-reach shelves; a 200-seat community programming room (twice the size of the library's current largest room); a significantly enhanced front entrance; an expanded Youth Services programming room; and a variety of smaller rooms for individuals and groups to meet, study, and work.

Zach Halmstad, a founding member of the Pablo Foundation (and co-founder/former CEO of JAMF Software), is enthusiastic about what the library's expansion can do for the community. He says, "The public library has been a part of my family's life for as long as I can remember. It is a place that gives everyone, regardless of their age or socioeconomic status, the space and tools to maximize their learning or to explore their creative sides, which in turn leads to innovative ideas that will benefit our entire community. From traditional books to expanded online learning, community rooms with modern audiovisual infrastructure, intergenerational learning opportunities, and so much more, I'm excited to see the next evolution of this foundational organization in our community for generations to come."

Questions about how to give can be directed to the Eau Claire Community Foundation, which supports the philanthropic portion of the Story Builder expansion campaign. Call 715-552-

3801 or visit www.eccfwi.org to learn more. Anyone interested in learning more about the campaign can visit www.epubliclibrary.info/storybuilder.

For other library information, people may contact Information & Reference by calling 715-839-5004, emailing librarian@eau Claire.lib.wi.us, or chatting with staff via the library's website at www.epubliclibrary.info.

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