



HMONG TIMES Online

"The Newspaper of the Hmong Community"



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Expanding Hmong Resource Center Library Serves Diverse Base of Users

By Amy Doeun

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Nai Christopher Lo and Cher Vue with some of the vast collection of Hmong books, journals, dissertations, videos, paintings and other Hmong artifacts. (Amy Doeun / HMONG TIMES)

The Hmong Resource Center Library has been a resource in the Hmong community for many years. Former Librarian Mark Pfeiffer recalls that he started as a volunteer in spring 2000 and was later hired in the fall of 2000. He worked to increase the collection until the summer of 2006. He currently works as a librarian at Texas ANM University in Corpus Christi, TX. "I am still very active," with the library Pfeiffer told HMONG TIMES.

"Up there the staff is doing a great job, there's lots of people coming in, but we want to keep the word out." The Resource Library serves a wide group of people from high school and college students to professors. There is an extensive children's collection as well as a nice collection of artifacts. Books must be used on site though there is a copier. The fee is 10 cents per copy. "I think the most unique thing about it is the journals and dissertations. No one else has collected them," Pfeiffer explained. There is also a complete archive of HMONG TIMES and Hmong Today newspapers as well as Hmong related articles in the mainstream.

In the entrance of the Library many of these main stream articles are displayed on the wall with a time line of recent Hmong history.

Current Librarian Cher Vue proudly showed a collection of paintings explaining the more distant history of the Hmong in China from Chi You to the last great war with China in the 1830s. "When the English introduced the handgun to China, we had no defense," Vue explained. "Many people don't know about Hmong leaders. The Chinese are starting to release the history of our people."

The Resource Library also has a collection of videos, academic and entertainment, that may be checked out free of charge. "We have professors for the colleges come and check out the videos."

Exciting things happening with the library include a completely updated website with a complete catalog at www.hmonglibrary.org. "We have had a heavily used website for many years. Now we have a website just for the library."

The library also received some funding from two local foundations, the St. Paul Foundation and Bigelow Foundation. "One issue we have always struggled with is funding," Pfeiffer explained. The grants offer 2 years of support and has enabled to organization to hire a librarian.

The library is part of the Hmong Cultural Center. Vue said that the cultural center looks to preserve culture and share it with a younger generation. There is a cultural expert on staff. He is in his 70s.

There are also ESL and citizenship classes in both English and Hmong.

Pfeiffer added, "One thing I was very proud of is that the user base is so diverse. There are families checking out kid's books, scholarly users, and more then half of the users are non-Hmong. Over the last several years there have been about 800-1000 users. Over half were affiliated with colleges all around MN and even out of state." For more information visit the Library on the 2nd floor of the Sunrise Shopping Center at 995 University Ave. in St. Paul.

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