

Below are the Portage District Library Board Trustee Candidate Statements for the November 8, 2022 election.

Each candidate was asked the following three questions:

1. Could you tell us a little about yourself and your familiarity with the Portage District Library's service area?
2. Why are you interested in serving as a library trustee?
3. What skills and abilities do you have related to serving as a trustee?

Jeanne Friedman

1) I have been a resident of Portage for 45 years and a high school World Language teacher for Portage Public Schools for over 20. In that time, my children and I have been "frequent fliers" at the library and it has been important to me that they have their own cards, that they maintain their own relationships with the library, and that they have every opportunity to engage books of their choice. Whether through involvement in the Summer Reading Program or a major addiction to the next Young Adult series, weekly visits became and still are our ritual. Given the amazing and enriching experiences we have had through books and activities, I would love to see this experience more wide-spread amongst the families of changing demographics in our increasingly diverse community.

2) I am interested in serving as a Library Trustee because in my public school position, I see our community changing at a fast pace and I see far too many students [and adults!] who do not possess library cards and who have never even sampled any of the library services. While I thought my family and I were maximizing the library ourselves, I have recently become aware that we have much to learn about the true extent of educational and recreational resources and other services available. I am anxious to check out those telescopes, obtain a few electronic downloads, and investigate these "hot spots". So many underused opportunities from which our community members could benefit in a myriad of ways! I would like to be a part of getting more young people into the library to utilize the available services and to partake in the monthly activities, because I feel that the future life of this library and of this community-at-large IS the youngsters.

3) In my experience as an educator and as a mom, I have learned to referee, to listen, and to mediate...and to save pennies. I approach situations with an open mind and a desire to expand my knowledge base in order to understand all possible ramifications

and consequences in decision-making, and am able to set aside my personal agenda in the scheme of a greater good. I see the library as one of this community's most underused resources and I am hoping that by my greater understanding as a trustee I will have the unique opportunity to expose other instructors, club advisers, and student supervisors to the many possibilities available through the library's services. With a stronger connection between library and schools, the underused library can help to fill the void of an underfunded program and can help to make the most of the tax dollars.

Cara Terry

I have lived in Portage for 54 years. My children have gone through the Portage Public Schools. I have volunteered with Kalamazoo in Bloom and the Portage District Library for 15 years. I find the staff at the library to be engaging, fun, and great to work with in whatever capacity they need. I have volunteered in many different areas in the library and as a result have a very good understanding of how the library functions and its mission. I have served on the board in the past and look forward to doing so again.

I would be interested in serving again, because I not only find the times challenging, but also feel that the library can play an active role in community development and understanding. There are so many groups the library serves and they are so open to serve any needs that they can fulfill. I want to see that continue as much as the resources allow. I feel as a trustee, I can support and further that attitude.

Since I have served as a volunteer for many years, I feel that I am in a position to understand and can work with both the leadership and the staff. The leadership of the library is strong and we have a staff capable of carrying out the libraries mission that involves ideas and programs for the greater community. The library is in a position to be a leader in the community and I would like to see that continue. The library has many things to offer the community and that can only be strengthened.

Donna VanderVries

My name is Donna VanderVries, and I am running for reelection as a library board trustee. I have lived in Portage for more than ten years with my husband Ed—a Portage man raised in the area. I have already had the privilege to serve on the library board for eight years. As an avid reader, the library offers me tremendous opportunities to dive into the latest best sellers as well as the classics. I'm also a

participant in some of the many book groups the library hosts to bring the community together around literature. When I am not working for the state or reading, I am a passionate college football fan. While on my multiple-hour daily commute, I avail myself of the Portage District Library's selection of audiobooks to make the miles fly by.

As Dr. Seuss says, "The more that you read the more that you know. The more that you know the more places you'll go." While I am originally from Ohio, I moved to Michigan following law school and fell in love with it! My husband and I have four children between us – Two are currently attending Michigan State University, one in the law school and the other pursuing a PhD in English. One of our kids is managing for the Millennium group while finishing her degree at Western Michigan University, and our last child is hard at work in the field of assessing.

I have immensely enjoyed my time serving on the Library Board and hope to continue to do so. I feel my time is an investment in the Portage Community, one that brings people together through texts and groups. As part of the library board, I assisted in developing strategic future planning and paying off old debt. I hope to continue these initiatives that will expand our library, both as a cultural space, and into new mediums which are essential for engaging our community.

I come to the board with a unique set of skills and knowledge. As an Equalization Director and Assessor, I am well informed on the library's biggest sources of funding: the general property tax. My affiliation with our legislative committee allows me to keep up-to-date with what is going on in Lansing and how state-level changes may affect our library patrons. I am both an attorney and a certified public accountant; the skills intrinsic to these lines of work qualify me for board service by providing me with the tools necessary to field legal questions as well as consider matters of fiscal importance. In addition to the Library Board, I have many years of experience in board and committee service for other organizations: this includes time as President of Mid Michigan Association of Assessing Officers and MI Association of Equalization Directors. I have also served as a board member for the MI Assessors Association, a Credit Union, and many others. Beyond board membership, I also volunteer and have volunteered in community organizations such as the Grand Rapids Symphony, God's Kitchen, Broadway Grand Rapids, and in local schools. If you would like to find out more about me, you can visit my website for the International Association of Assessing Officers election at www.donnavandervries.com. Thank you for your time and attention!