

**City of Racine, Wisconsin
Office of the Mayor**



City Hall
Office of Mayor Mason
730 Washington Ave
Racine WI 53403
262 636-9111
262-636-9570 FAX

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 20, 2020

CONTACT: Shannon Powell
262-636-9266

Racine Public Library to Welcome New Executive Director, Angela Zimmermann

Currently located in Palmyra, Zimmermann plans to relocate to Racine and begin new post on December 14th

City of Racine – Today, the Racine Public Library and the City of Racine announced the hiring of a new Executive Director of the Racine Public Library, Angela Zimmermann.

Zimmermann was selected through a competitive application and interview process held by the Racine Public Library Board after the retirement of former Executive Director Jessica MacPhail earlier in the year.

“It is a remarkable time for the Racine Public Library to be considering significant changes to how it operates and fulfills its mission. Angela Zimmermann brings a unique and nontraditional set of experiences and educational background as a professional librarian. Her innovative leadership and collaborative initiatives in the field of digital technology closely aligned with the Board of Trustees’ vision to be a world-class organization and library,” **said Racine Public Library Board Chair, Tracy Austin.**

Austin continued, “The Board of Trustees would like to thank Interim Co-Directors Darcy Mohr and Robert Margis for their guidance which allowed the library to offer remote services and programming to our community during a pandemic. They also faced the challenge of managing a very grim 2021 budget process. Throughout this period, they and all RPL staff have maintained their commitment to excellence.”

Zimmermann is in the process of relocating to Racine and will begin her new role on December 14, 2020.

“I was honored to be able to take part in the interview process that ultimately selected Angela. She has a wealth of experience, and her enthusiasm and energy are infectious. The Library is a critical institution in the City, not only for those looking for a good book, but because its mission is centered on equity and providing access to many vital social services. The Library director is an important member of the City’s senior leadership team, and I look forward to Angela joining us very soon,” **said City of Racine Mayor, Cory Mason.**

Incoming Executive Director Zimmermann had this to say about her background and passion for the Library:

“I’m originally from and grew up in South Milwaukee, WI so our family would frequently head down to Racine for the Danish kringles. It was always such a delight to bring home kringles from Racine! Despite being raised in South Milwaukee, I’ve lived, traveled, and studied quite a few years abroad. I’ve lived in Germany on several different occasions: studying in Jena, Germany, as well as serving an internship in Schwabach, Germany. I’ve also lived in Antofagasta, Chile where I taught English and German through an international educational program.

“I attended Concordia College in Moorhead, MN for my Bachelor of Arts degree in German and International Relations with a minor in Spanish. My Master of Arts is in Library and Information Science from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. I’ve been the Library Director at the Mukwonago Community Library for the past four

years in which the library has advanced significantly in areas of technology, innovation and building strong community partnerships.

“Prior to the Director’s position in Mukwonago, I held the Library Director position at the Powers Memorial Library in Palmyra, WI for one year. Preceding my work in libraries, my professional work came from the private sector where I worked with a German-owned manufacturing company working as a liaison for the company between the headquarters near Stuttgart, Germany, and the subsidiary, now located in Germantown, WI. I was hired to translate for them but this role also quickly merged into playing a developmental role in setting up different departments (the subsidiary was very new at the time in America) and working closely in the marketing and engineering departments. I was really able to learn and understand all of the components of how a business ran. I felt very fortunate to have such an opportunity and feel many of these learned skills have been transferable into the leadership roles I’ve held in libraries.

“I currently live in Palmyra, WI with my four-legged friend, Ludwig, but we will be relocating to the Racine area prior to my start date at the Racine Public Library on December 14th.

“The library has always played a significant role in my life. I clearly remember the excitement I had as a little girl when we’d visit the local library and stock up on our reading materials or bike down to the library during the summer to turn in our summer reading challenges. I’m very passionate about the role of the library within its respective community. The foundation of everything the library does is based on literacy and lifelong learning but I believe the library is immense with possibilities and extremely essential to the infrastructure of its community, and it’s important that we’re always looking at the continuum of where it can go.

“It’s also very important to me for the library to be seen as a welcoming place and valuable resource for all. My hope is that for everyone who has contact with the library in whatever manner, is left feeling inspired, eager to learn more, and can’t wait to connect with us again.”

Zimmermann also outlined her initial goals for the Racine Public Library:

“One of my initial goals will be to immediately connect with stakeholders and build key relationships to in turn implement new ideas and projects which will meet the needs of the community. I very much look forward to embedding myself within the community to really understand what the citizens would like to see from their local library.

“One of the areas that drew me to RPL was their new strategic plan and its 20 Great Leaps. The strategic plan was written based on a community-inclusive discovery approach. When I first read the plan, I said to myself “That is a library I want to work for!” The plan encompasses, what I believe, everything a 21st century library should strive for. I’m very eager to work closely with the RPL staff and the Board of Trustees to begin implementing this plan and leading the library into becoming a world-class organization.

“Other areas I have focused my library career on have been technology, innovation, and bridging the digital divide. Providing equitable services and access to learning and technology for all is one of my driving passions. Innovative thinking in these areas is needed now more than ever during COVID-19 and libraries have done a fantastic job at reinventing and adapting themselves to continue this work.

“In conclusion, I’m thrilled and honored to have this opportunity at the Racine Public Library and cannot wait to get started! I believe the library should be the pillar of its community and a resource to all, and I’m delighted to step in at RPL and continue this important work.”

About the City of Racine

With a population of 78,000, **Racine, Wisconsin** is the fifth largest municipality in the state of Wisconsin. It is home to manufacturing businesses that enjoy world-wide reputations, SC Johnson, CNH Industrial, Twin Disc, Modine, and In-Sink-Erator among them. Racine is also home to diverse cultures, a thriving downtown, and world-class beaches along the shores of Lake Michigan.

Racine Public Library Mission:

To lift up the lives of the people of the Racine community by embracing community diversity, prompting inclusion, creating opportunity, and by supporting the development of community literacy through a love of literature, learning and civic engagement.

###