

November 8, 2025

To: Library Board of Trustees
From: Bruce Gay
Re: 2026 Carnegie Gift

On October 22 I received the following email from Dame Louise Richardson, President of the Carnegie Corporation:

I am delighted to announce that Carnegie Libraries across America will each receive a \$10,000 gift as part of [Carnegie Libraries 250](#), a special initiative by Carnegie Corporation of New York to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Our founder, [Andrew Carnegie](#), who championed the free public library movement of the late 19th century, described libraries as “cradles of democracy” that “strengthen the democratic idea, the equality of the citizen, and the royalty of man.” At Carnegie, we still believe in his vision and are honored to recognize our connection to the libraries he founded.

We contacted each Carnegie Library and confirmed that about 1,280 still operate and acknowledge their association with Carnegie, making them eligible for this gift. Libraries may use the funds in any way they choose to mark the anniversary, further their mission, and benefit their community.

The \$10,000 library gifts anchor a \$20 million special initiative created to celebrate next year’s 250th anniversary by supporting America’s civic institutions and organizations that foster civic participation and bring people together.

Please join us in celebrating the service of Carnegie Libraries in communities nationwide.

This was apparently a well-kept secret and caused a lot of excitement in Library-Land. The gift is scheduled to arrive in January 2026. Of course, the library received a gift of \$15,000 from Andrew Carnegie in 1902 to build the building which now stands as our “Carnegie Room.”



321 WISCONSIN AVE. WAUKESHA, WI 53186-4173
262-524-3680 • WaukeshaPublicLibrary.org